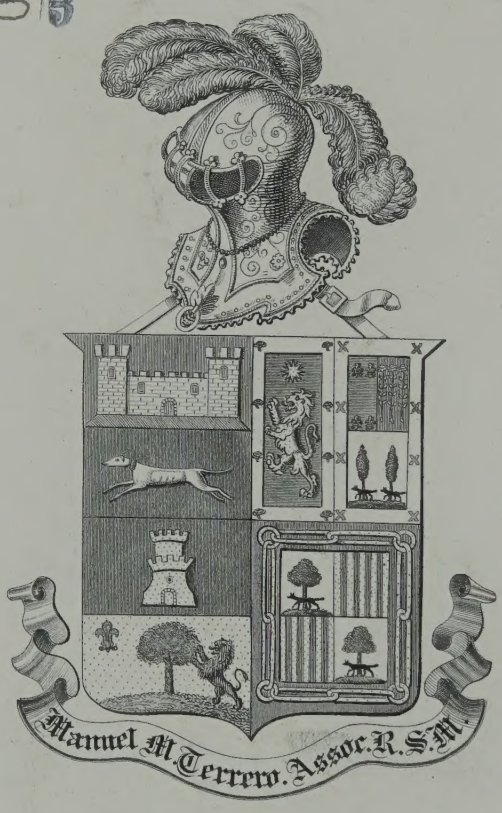
EGYPT

AND ITS MONUMENTS

NOT TO BE
TAKEN AWAY

L.B



Terrero Bequest

Manuel Maximo Terrero, who died in July 1926, bequeathed his collection of about two thousand books to the College, subject to the life interest of his widow, through whose generosity they were acquired in May 1928.

To "dear Father"
on his silver wedding
day - With love
& Congratulations
from Ellie

December 14th 1910

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE.

LIBRARY REGULATIONS.

The Library is open every week-day evening, from 6.30 to 10 o'clock, except on Saturdays, when it closes at 9.

This book may be kept for three weeks. If not returned within that period, the borrower wiill be liable to a fine of one penny per week.

If lost or damaged the borrower will be required to make good such loss or damage.

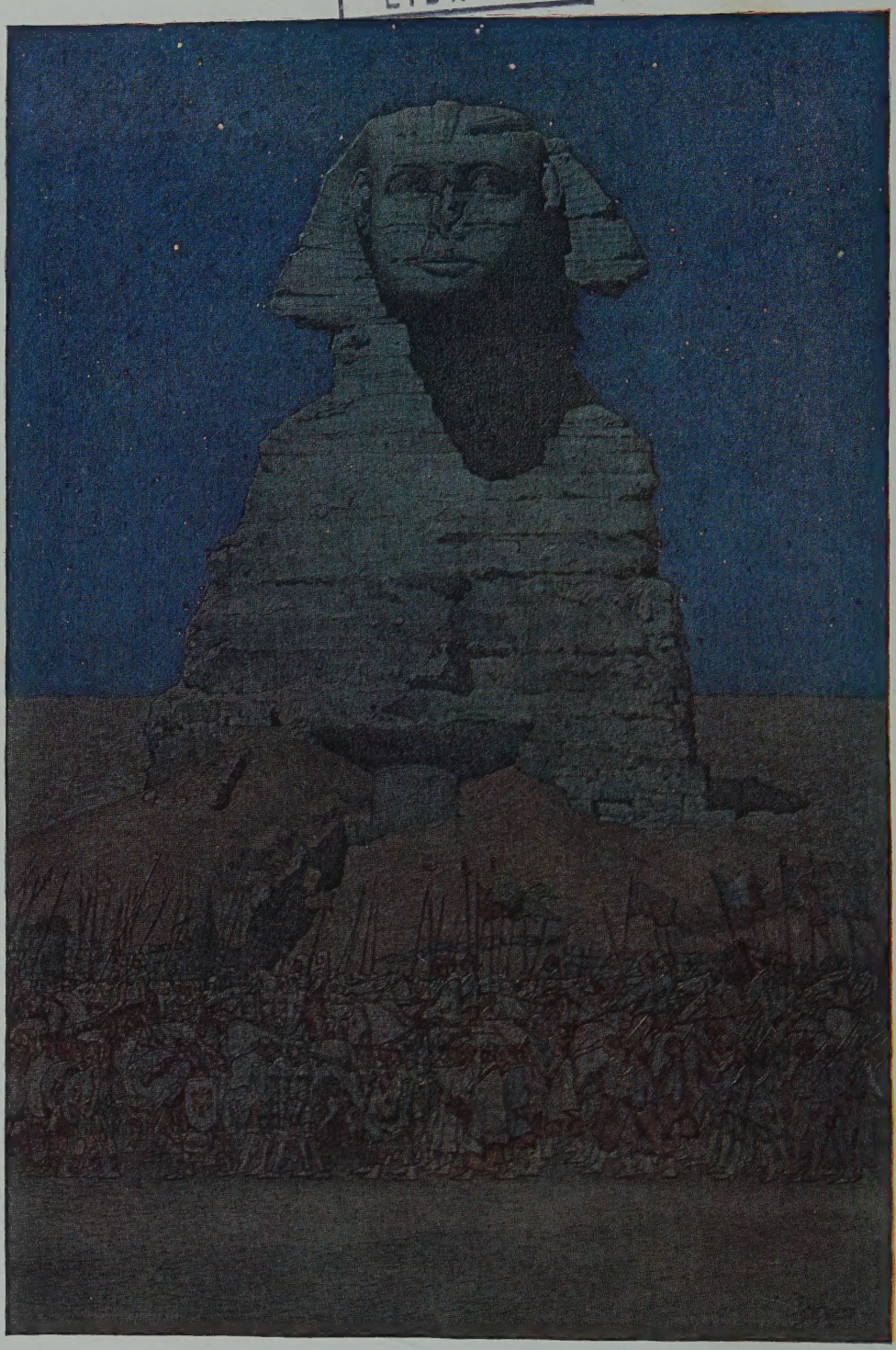
Only one book may be borrowed at a time

THE WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
AUSPICIUM
MELIORIS
ÆVI
MDCCCLIV
1913

EGYPT
AND ITS MONUMENTS

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.



THE SPHINX

THE SPHINX

14193

EGYPT

AND ITS MONUMENTS

BY

ROBERT HICHENS

ILLUSTRATED BY

JULES GUÉRIN

AND WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

LONDON

HODDER & STOUGHTON

1908

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE LIBRARY.

Copyright, 1908, by
THE CENTURY CO.

Published October, 1908

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES BY
THE DE VINNE PRESS, N. Y.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
I	THE PYRAMIDS	5
II	THE SPHINX	18
III	SAKKARA	28
IV	ABYDOS	37
V	THE NILE	46
VI	DENDERAH	52
VII	KARNAK	66
VIII	LUXOR	88
IX	COLOSSI OF MEMNON	107
X	MEDINET-ABU	120

CONTENTS

		PAGE
XI		
THE RAMESSEUM	. . . . .	132
XII		
DEIR-EL-BAHARI	. . . . .	148
XIII		
THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS	. . . . .	166
XIV		
EDFU	. . . . .	174
XV		
KOM OMBOS	. . . . .	196
XVI		
PHILÆ	. . . . .	212
XVII		
"PHARAOH'S BED"	. . . . .	228
XVIII		
OLD CAIRO	. . . . .	252

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

The Sphinx . . . . . *Frontispiece*
Painted by Jules Guérin.

The Pyramids of Ghizeh 4
From a Photograph.

From the summit of the Great Pyramid 7
From a Photograph.

Looking down the main passage of the Great Pyramid 11
From a Photograph.

The Pyramids of Ghizeh 16
Painted by Jules Guérin.

The Sphinx 20
From a Photograph.

The Sphinx and the Second Pyramid 25
From a Photograph.

The Step Pyramid of Sakkara 29
Painted by Jules Guérin.

Entrance to the Tomb of Thi 34
From a Photograph.

Temple of Seti I, Abydos 39
From a Photograph.

The Great Hall of Abydos 44
Painted by Jules Guérin.

Village on the site of Ancient Memphis 48
From a Photograph.

On the Roof of the Temple of Hathor, Denderah 53
From a Photograph.

The Temple of Hathor, Denderah 57
Painted by Jules Guérin.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

Figures of Cleopatra and her son Cæsarion on the wall of the Temple of Hathor 62
From a Photograph.

Interior, Temple of Khuns, Karnak 67
From a Photograph.

The Great Temple of Karnak 72
Painted by Jules Guérin.

The Sacred Lotus in the Temple at Karnak 76
From a Photograph.

Entrance to Temple of Rameses III, Karnak 81
From a Photograph.

The Sacred Lake, Karnak 85
Painted by Jules Guérin.

The Temple of Luxor from the easterly Pylon 90
From a Photograph.

The Court of Amenhotep III, Temple of Luxor 93
Painted by Jules Guérin.

In the Temple of Luxor 97
From a Photograph.

Obelisk and Pylon, Luxor 102
From a Photograph.

The Great Colonnade, Temple of Luxor 105
Painted by Jules Guérin.

Near view of the Colossi of Memnon 109
From a Photograph.

The Colossi of Memnon 114
Painted by Jules Guérin.

The Valley of the Tombs of the Kings 117
From a Photograph.

The Temple of Medinet-Abu 122
Painted by Jules Guérin.

Corner of Second Court, Temple of Rameses III, Medinet-Abu . 125
From a Photograph.

The Ramesseum 129
Painted by Jules Guérin.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

"The Thinking Place of Rameses the Great." Hall of Lotus Columns, Ramesseum 133
From a Photograph.

The Plain of Thebes from the roof of the Ramesseum 137
From a Photograph.

Hall of Lotus Columns, Ramesseum 141
From a Photograph.

Pilasters and broken colossal statue of Rameses II 146
From a Photograph.

The Temple of Queen Hatasu, Deir-el-Bahari 149
Painted by Jules Guérin.

Recent excavations at Deir-el-Bahari 153
From a Photograph.

"The half-naked workmen toiling and sweating in the sun" . . 157
From a Photograph.

The Vache Hathor of Denderah 162
From a Photograph.

Painted tomb chamber of Prince Sen-nofer, Thebes 167
From a Photograph.

Temple of Esneh 171
From a Photograph.

Prayer in the Desert 175
Painted by Jules Guérin.

The Temple of Edfu 180
Painted by Jules Guérin.

Pylon, Temple of Edfu 183
From a Photograph.

The Temple of Edfu from the top of the Pylon 190
From a Photograph.

The Court, Temple of Edfu 193
Painted by Jules Guérin.

Hypostyle Hall, Kôm Ombos 197
From a Photograph.

The Temple of Kôm Ombos 201
Painted by Jules Guérin.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

Temple of Kôm Ombos. Screen wall of Hypostyle Hall . . . 206
From a Photograph.

The Island of Elephantine, from Assuan 210
From a Photograph.

The Isle of Philæ before the construction of the dam 213
From a Photograph.

The Sacred Isle of Philæ 217
Painted by Jules Guérin.

The Temple of Isis, Philæ 222
From a Photograph.

Nearly submerged columns, Isle of Philæ 225
From a Photograph.

Pharaoh's Bed, before the construction of the dam 229
From a Photograph.

"Pharaoh's Bed," Island of Philæ 233
Painted by Jules Guérin.

In "Pharaoh's Bed," Island of Philæ 238
From a Photograph.

Fore-court of the Temple of Isis and "Pharaoh's Bed," Philæ . 241
From a Photograph.

Abu-Simbel 245
Painted by Jules Guérin.

Abu-Simbel, from the river 249
From a Photograph.

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

EGYPT AND ITS MONUMENTS

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From a photograph by Bonfils of Beirut

THE PYRAMIDS OF GHIZEH

EGYPT AND ITS MONUMENTS

I

THE PYRAMIDS

WHY do you come to Egypt? Do you come to gain a dream, or to regain lost dreams of old; to gild your life with the drowsy gold of romance, to lose a creeping sorrow, to forget that too many of your hours are sullen, gray, bereft? What do you wish of Egypt?

The Sphinx will not ask you, will not care. The Pyramids, lifting their unnumbered stones to the clear and wonderful skies, have held, still hold, their secrets; but they do not seek for yours. The terrific temples, the hot, mysterious tombs, odorous of the dead desires of men, crouching in and under the immeasurable sands, will mock you with their brooding silence, with their dim and somber repose. The brown children of the Nile, the toilers who sing their antique songs by the

shadoof and the sakieh, the dragomans, the smiling goblin merchants, the Bedouins who lead your camel into the pale recesses of the dunes—these will not trouble themselves about your deep desires, your perhaps yearning hunger of the heart and the imagination.

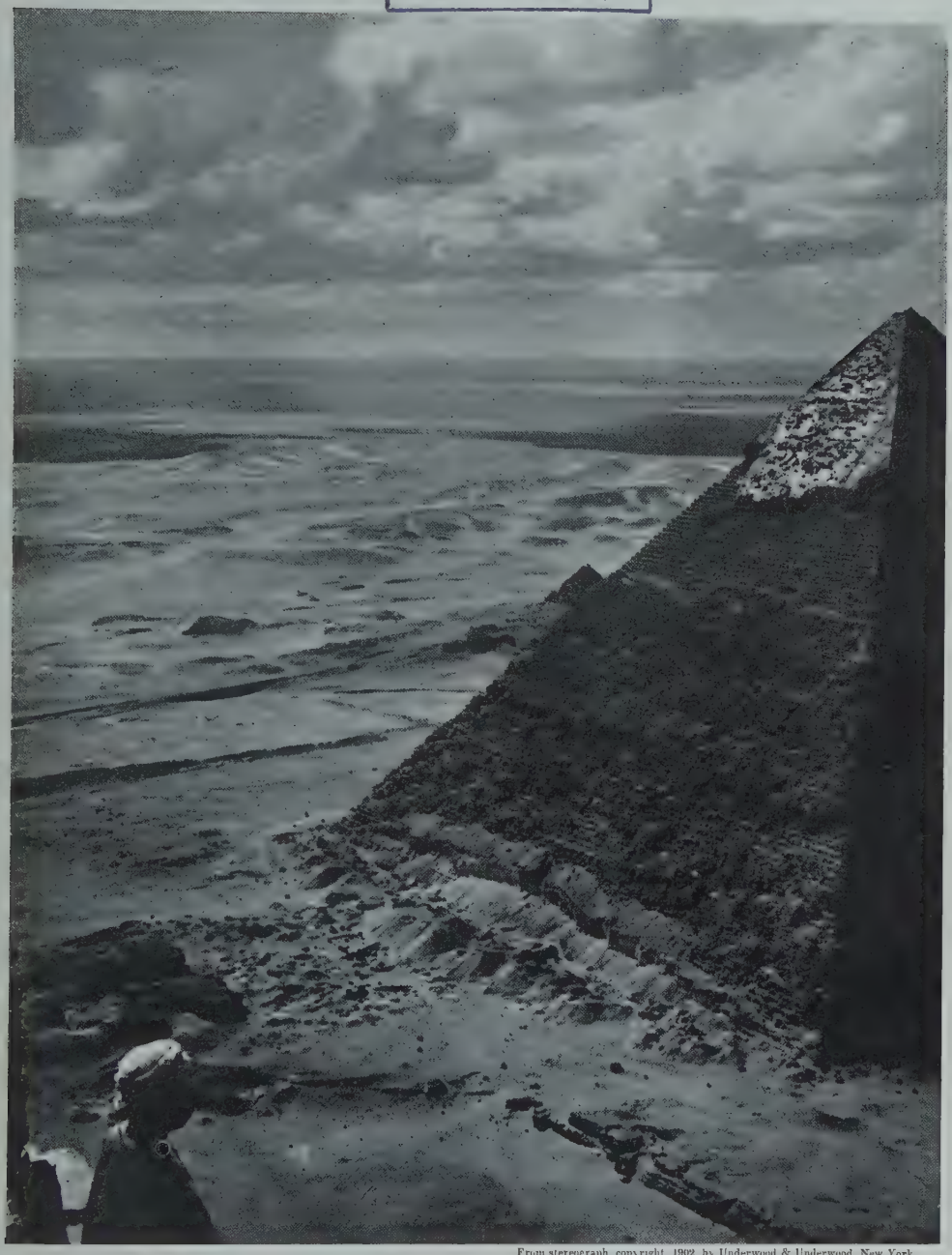
Yet Egypt is not unresponsive.

I came back to her with dread, after fourteen years of absence—years filled for me with the rumors of her changes. And on the very day of my arrival she calmly reassured me. She told me in her supremely magical way that all was well with her. She taught me once more a lesson I had not quite forgotten, but that I was glad to learn again—the lesson that Egypt owes her most subtle, most inner beauty to Kheper, although she owes her marvels to men; that when he created the sun which shines upon her, he gave her the luster of her life, and that those who come to her must be sun-worshipers if they would truly and intimately understand the treasure of romance that lies heaped within her bosom.

Thoth, says the old legend, traveled in the Boat of the Sun. If you would love Egypt rightly, you, too, must be a traveler in that bark. You must not fear to steep yourself in the mystery of gold, in the mystery of heat, in the mystery of silence that seems softly showered out of the sun. The sacred white lotus must be your emblem, and Horus, the hawk-headed, merged in Ra, your special deity. Scarcely had I set foot once

FROM THE SUMMIT OF THE GREAT PYRAMID

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.



From stereograph, copyright, 1902, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

more in Egypt before Thoth lifted me into the Boat of the Sun and soothed my fears to sleep.

I arrived in Cairo. I saw new and vast hotels; I saw crowded streets; brilliant shops; English officials driving importantly in victorias, surely to pay dreadful calls of ceremony; women in gigantic hats, with Niagaras of veil, waving white gloves as they talked of —I guessed—the latest Cairene scandal. I perceived on the right hand and on the left waiters created in Switzerland, hall porters made in Germany, Levantine touts, determined Jews holding false antiquities in their lean fingers, an English Baptist minister, in a white helmet, drinking chocolate on a terrace, with a guide-book in one fist, a ticket to visit monuments in the other. I heard Scottish soldiers playing, "I 'll be in Scotland before ye!" and something within me, a lurking hope, I suppose, seemed to founder and collapse—but only for a moment. It was after four in the afternoon. Soon day would be declining. And I seemed to remember that the decline of day in Egypt had moved me long ago—moved me as few, rare things have ever done. Within half an hour I was alone, far up the long road —Ismail's road—that leads from the suburbs of Cairo to the Pyramids. And then Egypt took me like a child by the hand and reassured me.

It was the first week of November, high Nile had not subsided, and all the land here, between the river and the sand where the Sphinx keeps watch, was hidden

beneath the vast and tranquil waters of what seemed a tideless sea—a sea fringed with dense masses of date-palms, girdled in the far distance by palm-trees that looked almost black, broken by low and tiny islands on which palm-trees kept the white and the brown houses in their feathery embrace. Above these isolated houses pigeons circled. In the distance the lateen sails of boats glided, sometimes behind the palms, coming into view, vanishing, mysteriously reappearing among their narrow trunks. Here and there a living thing moved slowly, wading homeward through this sea: a camel from the sands of Ghizeh, a buffalo, two donkeys, followed by boys who held with brown hands their dark blue skirts near their faces, a Bedouin leaning forward upon the neck of his quickly stepping horse. At one moment I seemed to look upon the lagoons of Venice, a watery vision full of a glassy calm. Then the palm-trees in the water, and growing to its edge, the pale sands that, far as the eyes could see, from Ghizeh to Sakkara and beyond, fringed it toward the west, made me think of the Pacific, of palmy islands of a paradise where men grow drowsy in well-being, and dream away the years. And then I looked still farther, beyond the pallid line of the sands, and I saw a Pyramid of gold, the wonder Khufu had built. As a golden wonder it saluted me after all my years of absence. Later I was to see it gray as gray sands, sulphur color in the afternoon from very near at hand,

LOOKING DOWN THE MAIN PASSAGE OF THE GREAT PYRAMID

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From stereograph, copyright, 1908, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

black as a monument draped in funereal velvet for a mourning under the stars at night, white as a monstrous marble tomb soon after dawn from the sand-dunes between it and Sakkara. But as a golden thing it greeted me, as a golden miracle I shall remember it.

Slowly the sun went down. The second Pyramid seemed also made of gold. Drowsily splendid it and its greater brother looked set on the golden sands beneath the golden sky. And now the gold came traveling down from the desert to the water, turning it surely to a wine like the wine of gold that flowed down Midas's throat; then, as the magic grew, to a Pactolus, and at last to a great surface that resembled golden ice, hard, glittering, unbroken by any ruffling wave. The islands rising from this golden ice were jet black, the houses black, the palms and their shadows that fell upon the marvel black. Black were the birds that flew low from roof to roof, black the wading camels, black the meeting leaves of the tall lebbek-trees that formed a tunnel from where I stood to Mena House. And presently a huge black Pyramid lay supine on the gold, and near it a shadowy brother seemed more humble than it, but scarcely less mysterious. The gold deepened, glowed more fiercely. In the sky above the Pyramids hung tiny cloud wreaths of rose red, delicate and airy as the gossamers of Tunis. As I turned, far off in Cairo I saw the first lights glittering across the fields of doura, silvery white, like diamonds. But the silver did not

call me. My imagination was held captive by the gold. I was summoned by the gold, and I went on, under the black lebbek-trees, on Ismail's road, toward it. And I dwelt in it many days.

The wonders of Egypt man has made seem to increase in stature before the spirits' eyes as man learns to know them better, to tower up ever higher till the imagination is almost stricken by their looming greatness. Climb the great Pyramid, spend a day with Abou on its summit, come down, penetrate into its recesses, stand in the king's chamber, listen to the silence there, feel it with your hands,—is it not tangible in this hot fastness of incorruptible death?—creep, like the surreptitious midget you feel yourself to be, up those long and steep inclines of polished stone, watching the bloomy darkness of the narrow walls, the far-off pinpoint of light borne by the Bedouin who guides you, hear the twitter of the bats that have their dwelling in this monstrous gloom that man has made to shelter the thing whose ambition could never be embalmed, though that, of all its qualities, should have been given here, in the land it dowered, a life perpetual. Now you know the great Pyramid. You know that you can climb it, that you can enter it. You have seen it from all sides, under all aspects. It is familiar to you.

No, it can never be that. With its more wonderful comrade, the Sphinx, it has the power peculiar, so it seems to me, to certain of the rock and stone monu-

THE PYRAMIDS OF GHIZEH

ments of Egypt, of holding itself ever aloof, almost like the soul of man which can retreat at will, like the Bedouin retreating from you into the blackness of the Pyramid, far up, or far down, where the pursuing stranger, unaided, cannot follow.

II

THE SPHINX

ONE day at sunset I saw a bird trying to play with the Sphinx — a bird like a swallow, but with a ruddy brown on its breast, a gleam of blue somewhere on its wings. When I came to the edge of the sand basin where perhaps Khufu saw it lying nearly four thousand years before the birth of Christ, the Sphinx and the bird were quite alone. The bird flew near the Sphinx, whimsically turning this way and that, flying now low, now high, but ever returning to the magnet which drew it, which held it, from which it surely longed to extract some sign of recognition. It twittered, it poised itself in the golden air, with its bright eyes fixed upon those eyes of stone which gazed beyond it, beyond the land of Egypt, beyond the world of men, beyond the center of the sun to the last verges of eternity. And presently it alighted on the head of the Sphinx, then on its ear, then on its breast; and over the breast it tripped jerkily, with tiny, elastic steps, looking upward, its whole body quivering apparently with a desire for comprehension — a desire for some manifestation of friendship. Then suddenly it spread its wings

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE

THE SPHINX

and, straight as an arrow, it flew away over the sands and the waters toward the doura-fields and Cairo.

And the sunset waned, and the afterglow flamed and faded, and the clear, soft African night fell. The pilgrims who day by day visit the Sphinx, like the bird, had gone back to Cairo. They had come, as the bird had come; as those who have conquered Egypt came; as the Greeks came, Alexander of Macedon, and the Ptolemies; as the Romans came; as the Mamelukes, the Turks, the French, the English came.

They had come—and gone.

And that enormous face, with the stains of stormy red still adhering to its cheeks, grew dark as the darkness closed in, turned brown as a fellah's face, as the face of that fellah who whispered his secret in the Sphinx's ear, but learnt no secret in return; turned black almost as a Nubian's face. The night accentuated its appearance of terrible repose, of superhuman indifference to whatever might befall. In the night I seemed to hear the footsteps of the dead—of all the dead warriors and the steeds they rode, defiling over the sand before the unconquerable thing they perhaps thought that they had conquered. At last the footsteps died away. There was a silence. Then, coming down from the Great Pyramid, surely I heard the light patter of a donkey's feet. They went to the Sphinx and ceased. The silence was profound. And I remembered the legend that Mary, Joseph, and the Holy Child once

halted here on their long journey, and that Mary laid the tired Christ between the paws of the Sphinx to sleep. Yet even of the Christ the soul within that body could take no heed at all.

It is, I think, one of the most astounding facts in the history of man that a man was able to contain within his mind, to conceive, the conception of the Sphinx. That he could carry it out in the stone is amazing. But how much more amazing it is that before there was the Sphinx he was able to see it with his imagination! One may criticize the Sphinx. One may say impertinent things that are true about it: that seen from behind at a distance its head looks like an enormous mushroom growing in the sand, that its cheeks are swelled inordinately, that its thick-lipped mouth is legal, that from certain places it bears a resemblance to a prize bulldog. All this does not matter at all. What does matter is that into the conception and execution of the Sphinx has been poured a supreme imaginative power. He who created it looked beyond Egypt, beyond the life of man. He grasped the conception of Eternity, and realized the nothingness of Time, and he rendered it in stone.

I can imagine the most determined atheist looking at the Sphinx and, in a flash, not merely believing, but feeling that he had before him proof of the life of the soul beyond the grave, of the life of the soul of Khufu beyond the tomb of his Pyramid. Always as you re-

turn to the Sphinx you wonder at it more, you adore more strangely its repose, you steep yourself more intimately in the aloof peace that seems to emanate from it as light emanates from the sun. And as you look on it at last perhaps you understand the infinite; you understand where is the bourne to which the finite flows with all its greatness, as the great Nile flows from beyond Victoria Nyanza to the sea.

And as the wonder of the Sphinx takes possession of you gradually, so gradually do you learn to feel the majesty of the Pyramids of Ghizeh. Unlike the Step Pyramid of Sakkara, which, even when one is near it, looks like a small mountain, part of the land on which it rests; the Pyramids of Ghizeh look what they are—artificial excrescences, invented and carried out by man, expressions of man's greatness. Exquisite as they are as features of the drowsy golden landscape at the setting of the sun, I think they look most wonderful at night, when they are black beneath the stars. On many nights I have sat in the sand at a distance and looked at them, and always, and increasingly, they have stirred my imagination. Their profound calm, their classical simplicity, are greatly emphasized when no detail can be seen, when they are but black shapes towering to the stars. They seem to aspire then like prayers prayed by one who has said, "God does not need my prayers, but I need them." In their simplicity they suggest a crowd of thoughts, and of desires. Guy de Maupassant

has said that of all the arts architecture is perhaps the most esthetic, the most mysterious, and the most nourished by ideas. How true this is you feel as you look at the Great Pyramid by night. It seems to breathe out mystery. The immense base recalls to you the labyrinth within; the long descent from the tiny slit that gives you entrance, your uncertain steps in its hot, eternal night, your falls on the ice-like surfaces of its polished blocks of stone, the crushing weight that seemed to lie on your heart as you stole uncertainly on, summoned almost as by the desert; your sensation of being forever imprisoned, taken and hidden by a monster from Egypt's wonderful light, as you stood in the central chamber, and realized the stone ocean into whose depths, like some intrepid diver, you had dared deliberately to come. And then your eyes travel up the slowly shrinking walls till they reach the dark point which is the top. There you stood with Abou, who spends half his life on the highest stone, hostages of the sun, bathed in light and air that perhaps came to you from the Gold Coast. And you saw men and camels like flies, and Cairo like a gray blur, and the Mokattam hills almost as a higher ridge of the sands. The mosque of Mohammed Ali was like a cup turned over. Far below slept the dead in that graveyard of the Sphinx, with its pale stones, its sand, its palm, its "Sycamores of the South," once worshiped and regarded as Hathor's living body. And beyond them on one side

THE SPHINX AND THE SECOND PYRAMID

LONG ISLAND
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

From stereograph, copyright, 1908, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

were the sleeping waters, with islands small, surely, as delicate Egyptian hands, and on the other the great desert that stretches, so the Bedouins say, on and on "for a march of a thousand days."

That base and that summit—what suggestion and what mystery in their contrast! What sober, eternal beauty in the dark line which unites them, now sharply, yet softly, defined against the night, which is purple as the one garment of the fellah! That line leads the soul irresistibly from earth to the stars.

III

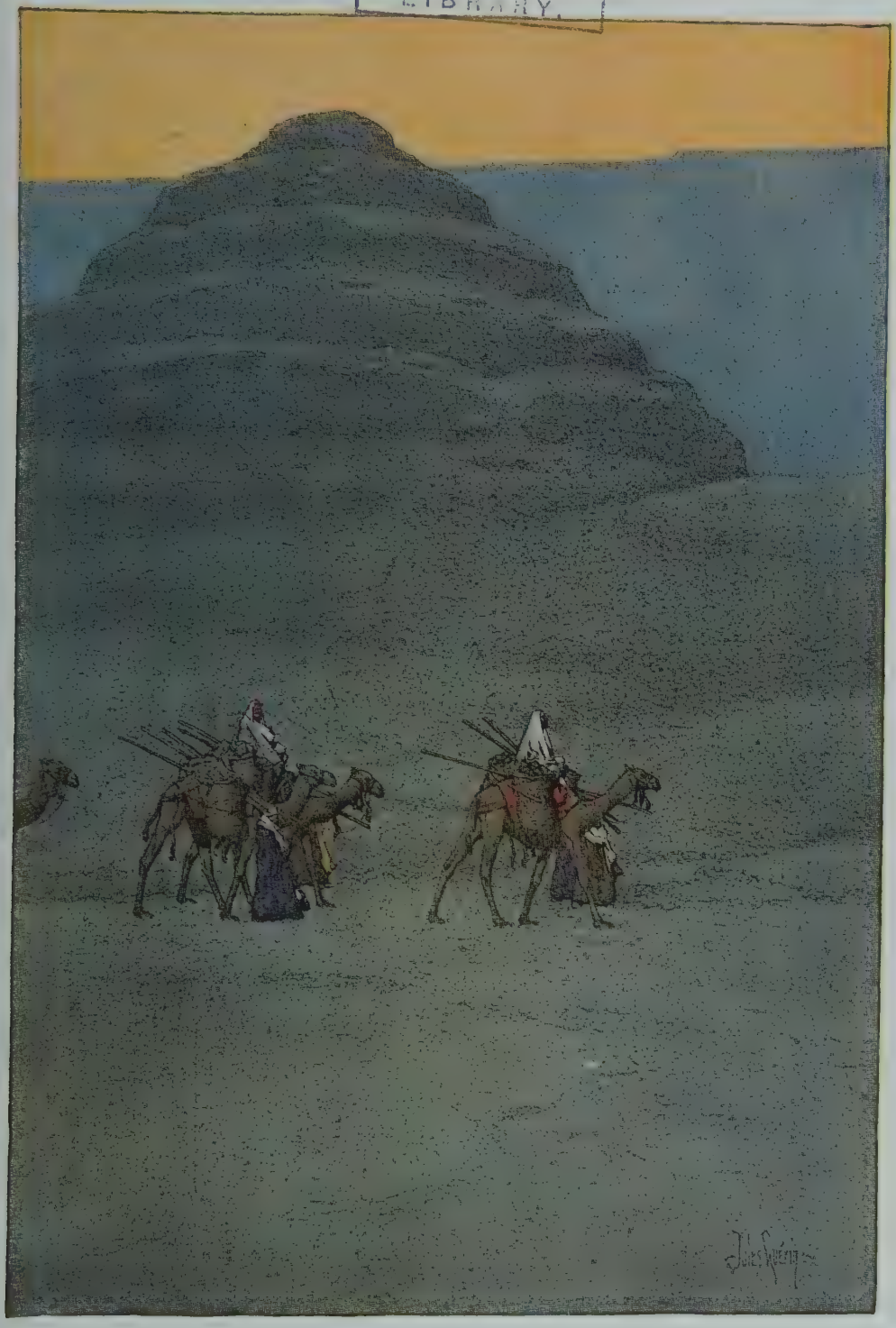
SAKKARA

IT was the "Little Christmas" of the Egyptians as I rode to Sakkara, after seeing a wonderful feat, the ascent and descent of the second Pyramid in nineteen minutes by a young Bedouin called Mohammed Ali, who very seriously informed me that the only Roumi who had ever reached the top was an "American gentlemens" called Mark Twain, on his first visit to Egypt. On his second visit, Ali said, Mr. Twain had a bad foot, and declared he could not be bothered with the second Pyramid. He had been up and down it once without a guide; he had disturbed the jackal which lives near its summit, and which I saw running in the sunshine as Ali drew near its lair, and he was satisfied to rest on his immortal laurels. To the Bedouins of the Pyramids Mark Twain's world-wide celebrity is owing to one fact alone: he is the only Roumi who has climbed the second Pyramid. That is why his name is known to every one.

It was the "Little Christmas," and from the villages in the plain the Egyptians came pouring out to visit

THE STEP PYRAMID OF SAKKARA

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.



their dead in the desert cemeteries as I passed by to visit the dead in the tombs far off on the horizon. Women, swathed in black, gathered in groups and jumped monotonously up and down, to the accompaniment of stained hands clapping, and strange and weary songs. Tiny children blew furiously into tin trumpets, emitting sounds that were terribly European. Men strode seriously by, or stood in knots among the graves, talking vivaciously of the things of this life. As the sun rose higher in the heavens, this visit to the dead became a carnival of the living. Laughter and shrill cries of merriment betokened the resignation of the mourners. The sand-dunes were black with running figures, racing, leaping, chasing one another, rolling over and over in the warm and golden grains. Some sat among the graves and ate. Some sang. Some danced. I saw no one praying, after the sun was up. The Great Pyramid of Ghizeh was transformed in this morning hour, and gleamed like a marble mountain, or like the hill covered with salt at El-Outaya, in Algeria. As we went on it sank down into the sands, until at last I could see only a small section with its top, which looked almost as pointed as a gigantic needle. Abou was there on the hot stones in the golden eye of the sun — Abou who lives to respect his Pyramid, and to serve Turkish coffee to those who are determined enough to climb it. Before me the Step Pyramid rose, brown almost as bronze, out of the

sands here desolate and pallid. Soon I was in the house of Marriette, between the little sphinxes.

Near Cairo, although the desert is real desert, it does not give, to me, at any rate, the immense impression of naked sterility, of almost brassy, sunbaked fierceness, which often strikes one in the Sahara to the south of Algeria, where at midday one sometimes has a feeling of being lost upon a waste of metal, gleaming, angry, tigerish in color. Here, in Egypt, both the people and the desert seem gentler, safer, more amiable. Yet these tombs of Sakkara are hidden in a desolation of the sands, peculiarly blanched and mournful; and as you wander from tomb to tomb, descending and ascending, stealing through great galleries beneath the sands, creeping through tubes of stone, crouching almost on hands and knees in the sultry chambers of the dead, the awfulness of the passing away of dynasties and of races comes, like a cloud, upon your spirit. But this cloud lifts and floats from you in the cheerful tomb of Thi, that royal councilor, that scribe and confidant, whose life must have been passed in a round of serene activities, amid a sneering, though doubtless admiring, population.

Into this tomb of white, vivacious figures, gay almost, though never wholly frivolous, for these men were full of purpose, full of an ardor that seduces even where it seems grotesque, I took with me a child of ten called Ali, from the village of Kafiah; and as I looked

WORKING N'S
COLL
LIBRARY.

ENTRANCE TO THE TOMB OF THI

from him to the walls around us, rather than the passing away of the races, I realized the persistence of type. For everywhere I saw the face of little Ali, with every feature exactly reproduced. Here he was bending over a sacrifice, leading a sacred bull, feeding geese from a cup, roasting a chicken, pulling a boat, carpentering, polishing, conducting a monkey for a walk, or merely sitting bolt upright and sneering. There were lines of little Alis with their hands held to their breasts, their faces in profile, their knees rigid, in the happy tomb of Thi; but he glanced at them unheeding, did not recognize his ancestors. And he did not care to penetrate into the tombs of Mera and Meri-Ra-ankh, into the Serapeum and the Mestaba of Ptah-hotep. Perhaps he was right. The Serapeum is grand in its vastness, with its long and high galleries and its mighty vaults containing the huge granite sarcophagi of the sacred bulls of Apis; Mera, red and white, welcomes you from an elevated niche benignly; Ptah-hotep, priest of the fifth dynasty, receives you, seated at a table that resembles a rake with long, yellow teeth standing on its handle, and drinking stiffly a cup of wine. You see upon the wall near by, with sympathy, a patient being plied by a naked and evidently an unyielding physician with medicine from a jar that might have been visited by Morgiana, a musician playing upon an instrument like a huge and stringless harp. But it is the happy tomb of Thi that lingers in your

memory. In that tomb one sees proclaimed with a marvelous ingenuity and expressiveness the joy and the activity of life. Thi must have loved life; loved prayer and sacrifice, loved sport and war, loved feasting and gaiety, labor of the hands and of the head, loved the arts, the music of flute and harp, singing by the lingering and plaintive voices which seem to express the essence of the East, loved sweet odors, loved sweet women,—do we not see him sitting to receive offerings with his wife beside him?—loved the clear nights and the radiant days that in Egypt make glad the heart of man. He must have loved the splendid gift of life, and used it completely. And so little Ali did very right to make his sole obeisance at Thi's delicious tomb, from which death itself seems banished by the soft and embracing radiance of the almost living walls.

This delicate cheerfulness, a quite airy gaiety of life, is often combined in Egypt, and most beautifully and happily combined, with tremendous solidity, heavy impressiveness, a hugeness that is well-nigh tragic; and it supplies a relief to eye, to mind, to soul, that is sweet and refreshing as the trickle of a tarantella from a reed flute heard under the shadows of a temple of Hercules. Life showers us with contrasts. Art, which gives to us a second and a more withdrawn life, opening to us a door through which we pass to our dreams, may well imitate life in this.

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

IV

ABYDOS

THROUGH a long and golden noontide, and on into an afternoon whose opulence of warmth and light it seemed could never wane, I sat alone, or wandered gently quite alone, in the Temple of Seti I at Abydos. Here again I was in a place of the dead. In Egypt one ever seeks the dead in the sunshine, black vaults in the land of the gold. But here in Abydos I was companioned by whiteness. The general effect of Seti's mighty temple is that it is a white temple when seen in full sunshine and beneath a sky of blinding blue. In an arid place it stands, just beyond an Egyptian village that is a maze of dust, of children, of animals, and flies. The last blind houses of the village, brown as brown paper, confront it on a mound, and as I came toward it a girl-child swathed in purple, with ear-rings, and a twist of orange handkerchief above her eyes, full of cloud and fire, leaned from a roof, sinuously as a young snake, to watch me. On each side, descending, were white, ruined walls, stretched out like defaced white arms of the temple to receive me. I stood still for a moment and looked at

the narrow, severely simple doorway, at the twelve broken columns advanced on either side, white and grayish white with their right angles, their once painted figures now almost wholly colorless.

Here lay the Osirians, those blessed dead of the land of Egypt, who worshiped the Judge of the Dead, the Lord of the Underworld, and who hoped for immortality through him—Osiris, husband of Isis, Osiris, receiver of prayers, Osiris the sun who will not be conquered by night, but eternally rises again, and so is the symbol of the resurrection of the soul. It is said that Set, the power of Evil, tore the body of Osiris into fourteen fragments and scattered them over the land. But multitudes of worshipers of Osiris believed him buried near Abydos and, like those who loved the sweet songs of Hafiz, they desired to be buried near him whom they adored; and so this place became a place of the dead, a place of many prayers, a white place of many longings.

I was glad to be alone there. The guardian left me in perfect peace. I happily forgot him. I sat down in the shadow of a column upon its mighty projecting base. The sky was blinding blue. Great bees hummed, like bourdons, through the silence, deepening the almost heavy calm. These columns, architraves, doorways, how mighty, how grandly strong they were! And yet soon I began to be aware that even here, where surely one should read only the Book of the Dead,

TEMPLE OF SETI I, ABYDOS

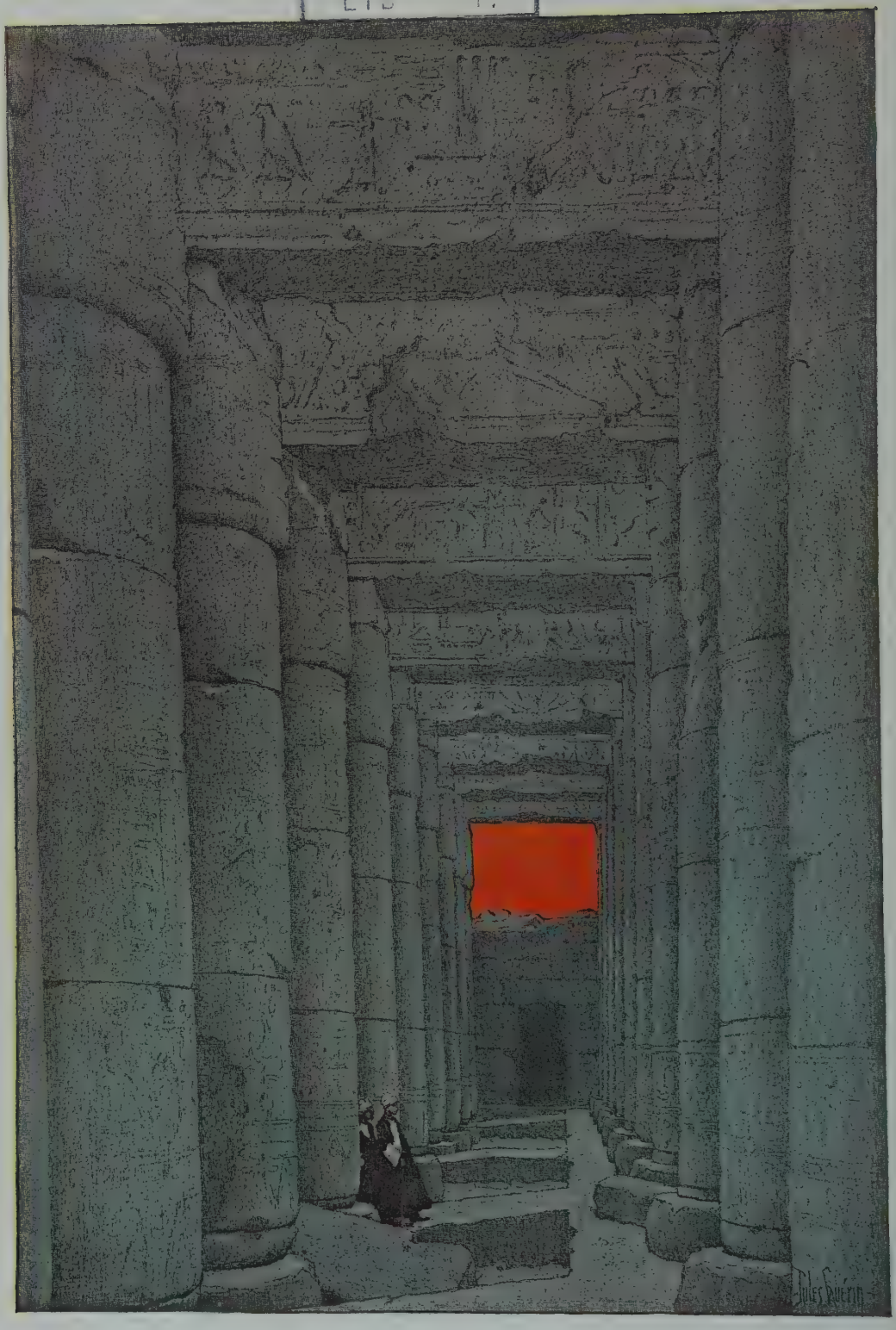
From stereograph, copyright, 1904, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

or bend down to the hot ground to listen if perchance one might hear the dead themselves murmuring over the chapters of Beatification far down in their hidden tombs, there was a lightness, a gentle gaiety of life, as in the tomb of Thi. The effect of solidity was immense. These columns bulged, almost like great fruits swollen out by their heady strength of blood. They towered up in crowds. The heavy roof, broken in places most mercifully to show squares and oblongs of that perfect, calling blue, was like a frowning brow. And yet I was with grace, with gentleness, with lightness, because in the place of the dead I was again with the happy, living walls. Above me, on the roof, there was a gleam of palest blue, like the blue I have sometimes seen at morning on the Ionian sea just where it meets the shore. The double rows of gigantic columns stretched away, tall almost as forest trees, to right of me and to left, and were shut in by massive walls, strong as the walls of a fortress. And on these columns, and on these walls, dead painters and gravers had breathed the sweet breath of life. Here in the sun, for me alone, as it seemed, a population followed their occupations. Men walked, and kneeled, and stood, some white and clothed, some nude, some red as the red man's child that leaped beyond the sea. And here was the lotus-flower held in reverent hands, not the rose-lotus, but the blossom that typified the rising again of the sun, and that, worn as an amulet, signified

the gift of eternal youth. And here was hawk-faced Horus, and here a priest offering sacrifice to a god, belief in whom has long since passed away. A king revealed himself to me, adoring Ptah, "Father of the beginnings," who established upon earth, my figures thought, the everlasting justice, and again at the knees of Amen burning incense in his honor. Isis and Osiris stood together, and sacrifice was made before their sacred bark. And Seti worshiped them, and Seshta, goddess of learning, wrote in the book of eternity the name of the king.

The great bees hummed, moving slowly in the golden air among the mighty columns, passing slowly among these records of lives long over, but which seemed still to be. And I looked at the lotus-flowers which the little grotesque hands were holding, had been holding for how many years—the flowers that typified the rising again of the sun and the divine gift of eternal youth. And I thought of the bird and the Sphinx, the thing that was whimsical wooing the thing that was mighty. And I gazed at the immense columns and at the light and little figures all about me. Bird and Sphinx, delicate whimsicality, calm and terrific power! In Egypt the dead men have combined them, and the combination has an irresistible fascination, weaves a spell that entrances you in the sunshine and beneath the blinding blue. At Abydos I knew it. And I loved the columns that seemed blown out with ex-

WORK
LTD



THE GREAT HALL OF ABYDOS

uberant strength, and I loved the delicate white walls that, like the lotus-flower, give to the world a youth that seems eternal—a youth that is never frivolous, but that is full of the divine, and yet pathetic, animation of happy life.

The great bees hummed more drowsily. I sat quite still in the sun. And then presently, moved by some prompting instinct, I turned my head, and, far off, through the narrow portal of the temple, I saw the girl-child swathed in purple still lying, sinuously as a young snake, upon the palm-wood roof above the brown earth wall to watch me with her eyes of cloud and fire.

And upon me, like cloud and fire—cloud of the tombs and the great temple columns, fire of the brilliant life painted and engraved upon them, there stole the spell of Egypt.

V

THE NILE

I DO not find in Egypt any more the strangeness that once amazed, and at first almost bewildered me. Stranger far is Morocco, stranger the country beyond Biskra, near Mogar, round Touggourt, even about El Kantara. There I feel very far away, as a child feels distance from dear, familiar things. I look to the horizon expectant of I know not what magical occurrences, what mysteries. I am aware of the summons to advance to marvelous lands, where marvelous things must happen. I am taken by that sensation of almost trembling magic which came to me when first I saw a mirage far out in the Sahara. But Egypt, though it contains so many marvels, has no longer for me the marvelous atmosphere. Its keynote is seductiveness.

In Egypt one feels very safe. Smiling policemen in clothes of spotless white—emblematic, surely, of their innocence!—seem to be everywhere, standing calmly in the sun. Very gentle, very tender, although perhaps not very true, are the Bedouin at the Pyramids. Up the Nile the fellaheen smile as kindly as the police-

WORK[illegible]'S
COL[illegible]
LIBRARY.

From a photograph by Bonfils of Beirut

VILLAGE ON THE SITE OF ANCIENT MEMPHIS

men, smile protectingly upon you, as if they would say, "Allah has placed us here to take care of the confiding stranger." No ferocious demands for money fall upon my ears; only an occasional suggestion is subtly conveyed to me that even the poor must live and that I am immensely rich. An amiable, an almost enticing seductiveness seems emanating from the fertile soil, shining in the golden air, gleaming softly in the amber sands, dimpling in the brown, the mauve, the silver eddies of the Nile. It steals upon one. It ripples over one. It laps one as if with warm and scented waves. A sort of lustrous languor overtakes one. In physical well-being one sinks down, and with wide eyes one gazes and listens and enjoys, and thinks not of the morrow.

The dahabiyeh—her very name, the *Loulia*, has a gentle, seductive, cooing sound—drifts broadside to the current with furled sails, or glides smoothly on before an amiable north wind with sails unfurled. Upon the bloomy banks, rich brown in color, the brown men stoop, and straighten themselves, and stoop again, and sing. The sun gleams on their copper skins, which look polished and metallic. Crouched in his net behind the drowsy oxen, the little boy circles the livelong day with the sakieh. And the sakieh raises its wailing, wayward voice and sings to the shadoof; and the shadoof sings to the sakieh; and the lifted water falls and flows away into the green wilderness of doura

that, like a miniature forest, spreads on every hand to the low mountains, which do not perturb the spirit, as do the iron mountains of Algeria. And always the sun is shining, and the body is drinking in its warmth, and the soul is drinking in its gold. And always the ears are full of warm and drowsy and monotonous music. And always the eyes see the lines of brown bodies, on the brown river-banks above the brown waters, bending, straightening, bending, straightening, with an exquisitely precise monotony. And always the *Loulia* seems to be drifting, so quietly she slips up, or down, the level waterway.

And one drifts, too; one can but drift, happily, sleepily, forgetting every care. From Abydos to Denderah one drifts, and from Denderah to Karnak, to Luxor, to all the marvels on the western shore; and on to Edfu, to Kom Ombos, to Assuan, and perhaps even into Nubia, to Abu-Simbel and to Wadi-Halfa. Life on the Nile is a long dream, golden and sweet as honey of Hymettus. For I let the "divine serpent," who at Philæ may be seen issuing from her charmed cavern, take me very quietly to see the abodes of the dead, the halls of the vanished, upon her green and sterile shores. I know nothing of the bustling, shrieking steamer that defies her, churning into angry waves her waters for the edification of those who would "do" Egypt and be gone before they know her.

If you are in a hurry, do not come to Egypt. To

hurry in Egypt is as wrong as to fall asleep in Wall Street, or to sit in the Greek Theater at Taormina, reading "How to Make a Fortune with a Capital of Fifty Pounds."

WOMEN'S COLLEGE
LIBRARY

VI

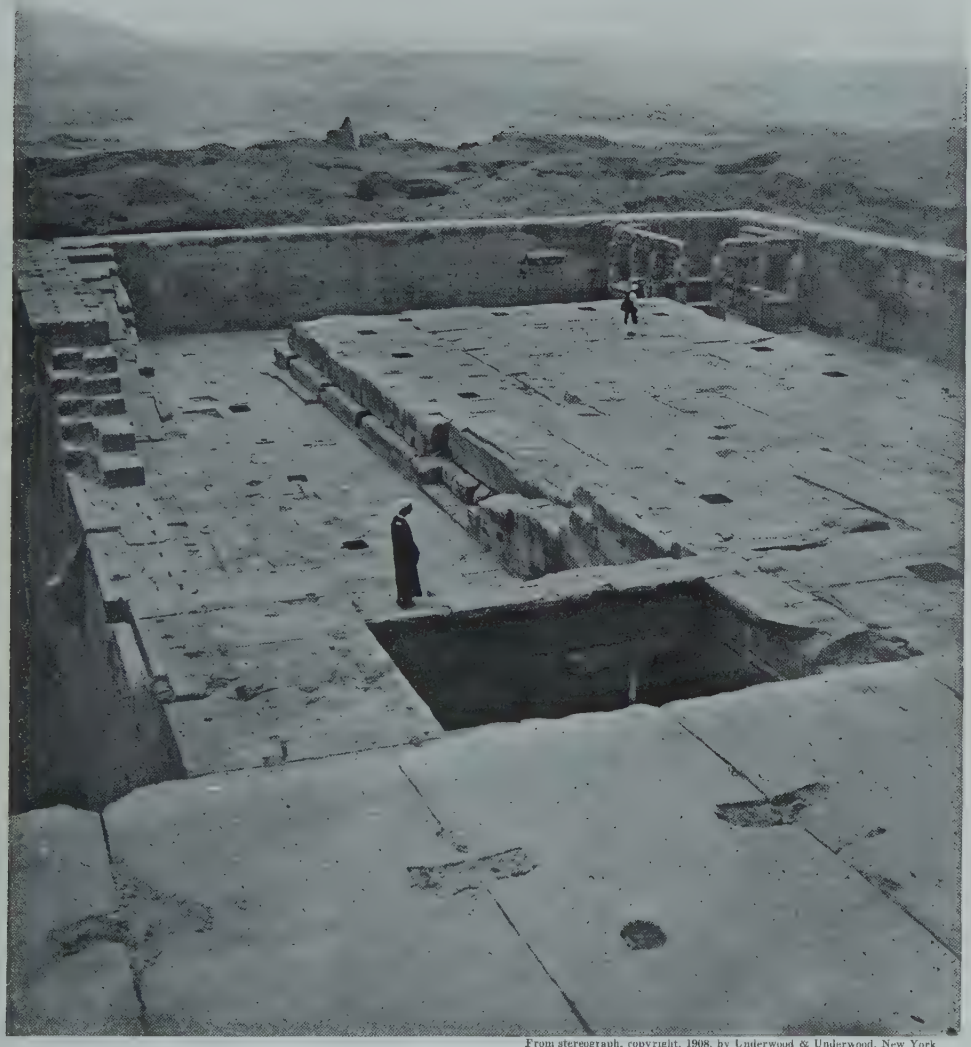
DENDERAH

FROM Abydos, home of the cult of Osiris, judge of the dead, I came to Denderah, the great temple of the "Lady of the Underworld," as the goddess Hathor was sometimes called, though she was usually worshiped as the Egyptian Aphrodite, goddess of joy, goddess of love and loveliness. It was early morning when I went ashore. The sun was above the eastern hills, and a boy, clad in a rope of plaited grass, sent me half shyly the greeting, "May your day be happy!"

Youth is, perhaps, the most divine of all the gifts of the gods, as those who wore the lotus-blossom amulet believed thousands of years ago, and Denderah, appropriately, is a very young Egyptian temple, probably, indeed, the youngest of all the temples on the Nile. Its youthfulness—it is only about two thousand years of age—identifies it happily with the happiness and beauty of its presiding deity, and as I rode toward it on the canal-bank in the young freshness of the morning, I thought of the goddess Safekh and of the sacred Persea-tree. When Safekh inscribed upon a leaf of

ON THE ROOF OF THE TEMPLE OF HATHOR, DENDERAH

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.



From stereograph, copyright, 1908, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

the Persea-tree the name of king or conqueror, he gained everlasting life. Was it the life of youth? An everlasting life of middle age might be a doubtful benefit. And then mentally I added, "unless one lived in Egypt." For here the years drop from one, and every golden hour brings to one surely another drop of the wondrous essence that sets time at defiance and charms sad thoughts away.

Unlike White Abydos, White Denderah stands apart from habitations, in a still solitude upon a blackened mound. From far off I saw the façade, large, bare, and sober, rising, in a nakedness as complete as that of Aphrodite rising from the wave, out of the plain of brown, alluvial soil that was broken here and there by a sharp green of growing things. There was something of sadness in the scene, and again I thought of Hathor as the "Lady of the Underworld," some deep-eyed being, with a pale brow, hair like the night, and yearning, wistful hands stretched out in supplication. There was a hush upon this place. The loud and vehement cry of the shadoof-man died away. The sakieh droned in my ears no more like distant Sicilian pipes playing at Natale. I felt a breath from the desert. And, indeed, the desert was near—that realistic desert which suggests to the traveler approaches to the sea, so that beyond each pallid dune, as he draws near it, he half expects to hear the lapping of the waves. Presently, when, having ascended that

marvelous staircase of the New Year, walking in procession with the priests upon its walls toward the rays of Ra, I came out upon the temple roof, and looked upon the desert—upon sheeny sands, almost like slopes of satin shining in the sun, upon paler sands in the distance, holding an Arab *campo santo*, in which rose the little creamy cupolas of a sheik's tomb, surrounded by a creamy wall, those little cupolas gave to me a feeling of the real, the irresistible Africa such as I had not known since I had been in Egypt; and I thought I heard in the distance the ceaseless hum of praying and praising voices.

"God hath rewarded the faithful with gardens through which flow rivulets. They shall be forever therein, and that is the reward of the virtuous."

The sensation of solemnity which overtook me as I approached the temple deepened when I drew close to it, when I stood within it. In the first hall, mighty, magnificent, full of enormous columns from which faces of Hathor once looked to the four points of the compass, I found only one face almost complete, saved from the fury of fanatics by the protection of the goddess of chance, in whom the modern Egyptian so implicitly believes. In shape it was a delicate oval. In the long eyes, about the brow, the cheeks, there was a strained expression that suggested to me more than a gravity—almost an anguish—of spirit. As I looked at it, I thought of Eleanora Duse. Was this the ideal of joy

THE TEMPLE OF HATHOR, DENDERAH

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

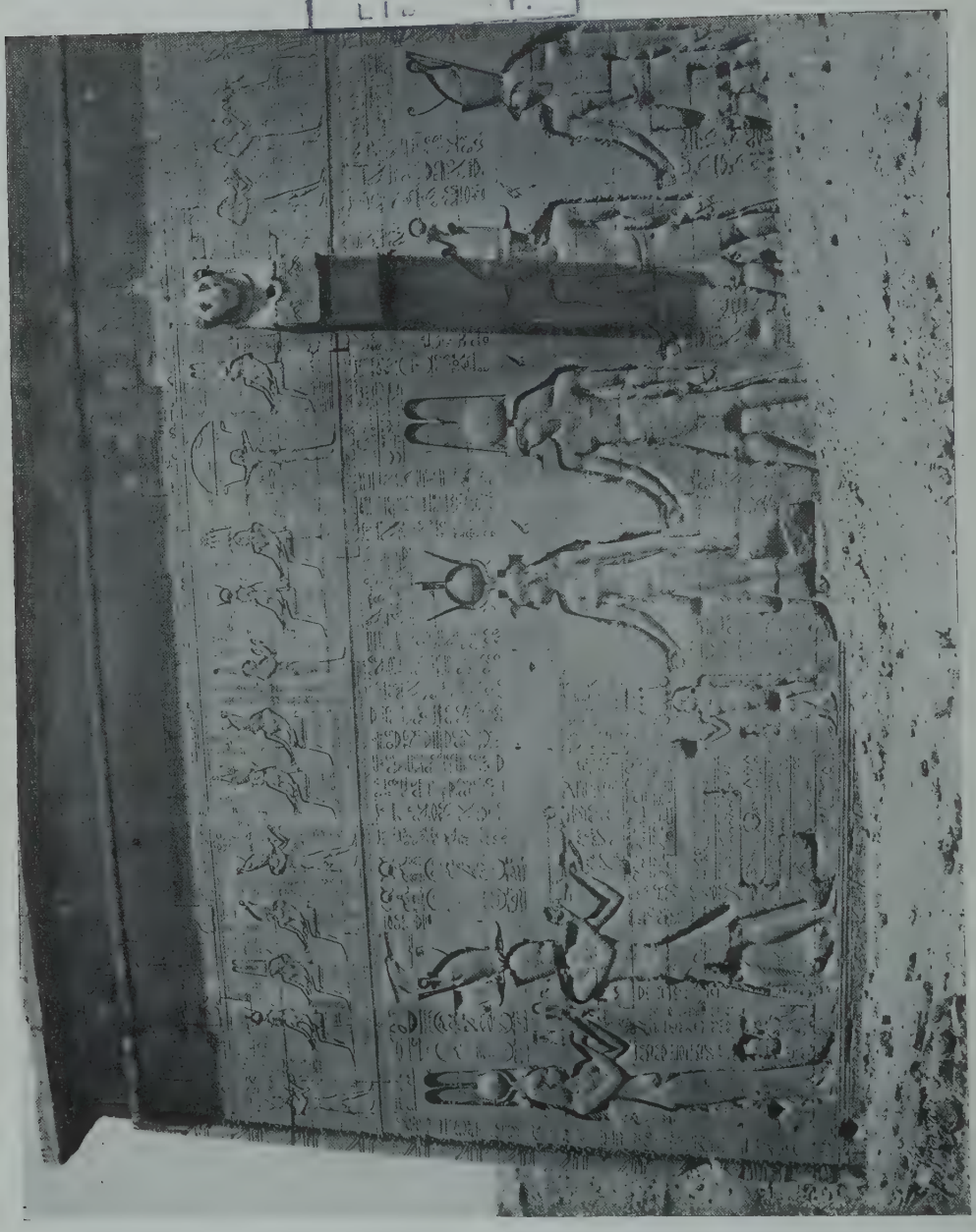
in the time of the Ptolemies? Joy may be rapturous, or it may be serene; but could it ever be like this? The pale, delicious blue that here and there, in tiny sections, broke the almost haggard, grayish whiteness of this first hall with the roof of black, like bits of an evening sky seen through tiny window-slits in a somber room, suggested joy, was joy summed up in color. But Hathor's face was weariful and sad.

From the gloom of the inner halls came a sound, loud, angry, menacing, as I walked on, a sound of menace and an odor, heavy and deathlike. Only in the first hall had those builders and decorators of two thousand years ago been moved by their conception of the goddess to hail her, to worship her, with the purity of white, with the sweet gaiety of turquoise. Or so it seems to-day, when the passion of Christianity against Hathor has spent itself and died. Now Christians come to seek what Christian Copts destroyed; wander through the deserted courts, desirous of looking upon the faces that have long since been hacked to pieces. A more benign spirit informs our world, but, alas! Hathor has been sacrificed to the devilries of old. And it is well, perhaps, that her temple should be sad, like a place of silent waiting for the glories that are gone.

With every step my melancholy grew. Encompassed by gloomy odors, assailed by the clamor of gigantic bats, which flew furiously among the monstrous pillars near a roof ominous as a storm-cloud, my spirit was

haunted by the sad eyes of Hathor, which gaze forever from that column in the first hall. Were they always like that? Once that face dwelt with a crowd of other faces, looked upon a glory of worship. And all the other faces have gone, and all the glory has passed. And, like so many of the living, the goddess has paid for her splendors. The pendulum swung, and where men adored, men hated her—her the goddess of love and loveliness. And as the human face changes when terror and sorrow come, I felt as if Hathor's face of stone had changed upon its column, looking toward the Nile, in obedience to the anguish in her heart; I felt as if Denderah were a majestic house of grief. So I must always think of it, dark, tragic, and superb. The Egyptians once believed that when death came to a man, the soul of him, which they called the Ba, winged its way to the gods, but that, moved by a sweet unselfishness, it returned sometime to his tomb, to give comfort to the poor, deserted mummy. Upon the lids of sarcophagi it is sometimes represented as a bird, flying down to, or resting upon, the mummy. As I went onward in the darkness, among the columns, over the blocks of stone that form the pavements, seeing vaguely the sacred boats upon the walls, Horus and Thoth, the king before Osiris; as I mounted and descended with the priests to roof and floor, I longed, instead of the clamor of the bats, to hear the light flutter of the soft wings of the Ba of Hathor, flying

WORK N'S
C
LI Y.



FIGURES OF CLEOPATRA AND HER SON CÆSARION ON THE WALL OF THE TEMPLE OF HATHOR

from Paradise to this sad temple of the desert to bring her comfort in the gloom. I thought of her as a poor woman, suffering as only women can in loneliness.

In the museum at Cairo there is the mummy of "the lady Amanit, priestess of Hathor." She lies there upon her back, with her thin body slightly turned toward the left side, as if in an effort to change her position. Her head is completely turned to the same side. Her mouth is wide open, showing all the teeth. The tongue is lolling out. Upon the head the thin, brown hair makes a line above the little ear, and is mingled at the back of the head with false tresses. Round the neck is a mass of ornaments, of amulets and beads. The right arm and hand lie along the body. The expression of "the lady Amanit" is very strange, and very subtle; for it combines horror—which implies activity—with a profound, an impenetrable repose, far beyond the reach of all disturbance. In the temple of Denderah I fancied the lady Amanit ministering sadly, even terribly, to a lonely goddess, moving in fear through an eternal gloom, dying at last there, overwhelmed by tasks too heavy for that tiny body, the ultra-sensitive spirit that inhabited it. And now she sleeps—one feels that, as one gazes at the mummy—very profoundly, though not yet very calmly, the lady Amanit. But her goddess—still she wakes upon her column.

When I came out at last into the sunlight of the

growing day, I circled the temple, skirting its gigantic, corniced walls, from which at intervals the heads and paws of resting lions protrude, to see another woman whose fame for loveliness and seduction is almost as legendary as Aphrodite's. It is fitting enough that Cleopatra's form should be graven upon the temple of Hathor; fitting, also, that though I found her in the presence of deities, and in the company of her son, Cæsarion, her face, which is in profile, should have nothing of Hathor's sad impressiveness. This, no doubt, is not the real Cleopatra. Nevertheless, this face suggests a certain self-complacent cruelty and sensuality essentially human, and utterly detached from all divinity, whereas in the face of the goddess there is a something remote, and even distantly intellectual, which calls the imagination to "the fields beyond."

As I rode back toward the river, I saw again the boy clad in the rope of plaited grass, and again he said, less shyly, "May your day be happy!" It was a kindly wish. In the dawn I had felt it to be almost a prophecy. But now I was haunted by the face of the goddess of Denderah, and I remembered the legend of the lovely Laïs, who, when she began to age, covered herself from the eyes of men with a veil, and went every day at evening to look upon her statue, in which the genius of Praxiteles had rendered permanent the beauty the woman could not keep. One evening, hanging to the statue's pedestal by a garland of red roses, the sculptor

found a mirror, upon the polished disk of which were traced these words:

"Laïs, O Goddess, consecrates to thee her mirror: no longer able to see there what she was, she will not see there what she has become."

My Hathor of Denderah, the sad-eyed dweller on the column in the first hall, had she a mirror, would surely hang it, as Laïs hung hers, at the foot of the pedestal of the Egyptian Aphrodite; had she a veil, would surely cover the face that, solitary among the cruel evidences of Christian ferocity, silently says to the gloomy courts, to the shining desert and the Nile:

"Once I was worshiped, but I am worshiped no longer."

VII

KARNAK

BUILDINGS have personalities. Some fascinate as beautiful women fascinate; some charm as a child may charm, naïvely, simply, but irresistibly. Some, like conquerors, men of blood and iron, without bowels of mercy, pitiless and determined, strike awe to the soul, mingled with the almost gasping admiration that power wakes in man. Some bring a sense of heavenly peace to the heart. Some, like certain temples of the Greeks, by their immense dignity, speak to the nature almost as music speaks, and change anxiety to trust. Some tug at the hidden chords of romance and rouse a trembling response. Some seem to be mingling their tears with the tears of the dead; some their laughter with the laughter of the living. The traveler, sailing up the Nile, holds intercourse with many of these different personalities. He is sad, perhaps, as I was with Denderah; dreams in the sun with Abydos; muses with Luxor beneath the little, tapering minaret whence the call to prayer drops down to be answered by the angelus bell; falls into a reverie in

INTERIOR, TEMPLE OF KHUNS, KARNAK

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From stereograph, copyright, 1907, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

the "thinking place" of Rameses II, near to the giant that was once the mightiest of all Egyptian statues; eagerly wakes to the fascination of record at Deir-el-Bahari; worships in Edfu; by Philæ is carried into a realm of delicate magic, where engineers are not. Each prompts him to a different mood; each wakes in his nature a different response. And at Karnak what is he? What mood enfolds him there? Is he sad, thoughtful, awed, or gay?

An old lady, in a helmet and other things considered no doubt by her as suited to Egypt rather than to herself, remarked in my hearing, with a Scotch accent and an air of summing up, that Karnak was "very nice indeed." There she was wrong—Scotch and wrong. Karnak is not nice. No temple that I have seen upon the banks of the Nile is nice. And Karnak cannot be summed up in a phrase or in many phrases; cannot even be adequately described in few or many words.

Long ago I saw it lighted up with colored fires one night for the khedive, its ravaged magnificence tinted with rose and livid green and blue, its pylons glittering with artificial gold, its population of statues, its obelisks, and columns, changing from things of dream to things of day, from twilight marvels to shadowy specters, and from these to hard and piercing realities at the cruel will of pigmies crouching by its walls. Now, after many years, I saw it first quietly by moonlight after watching the sunset from the summit of the

great pylon. That was a pageant worth more than the khedive's.

I was in the air; had something of the released feeling I have often known upon the tower of Biskra, looking out toward evening to the Sahara spaces. But here I was not confronted with an immensity of nature, but with a gleaming river and an immensity of man. Beneath me was the native village, in the heart of daylight dusty and unkempt, but now becoming charged with velvety beauty, with the soft and heavy mystery that at evening is born among great palm-trees. Along the path that led from it, coming toward the avenue of sphinxes with ram's-heads that watch forever before the temple door, a great white camel stepped, its rider a tiny child with a close, white cap upon his head. The child was singing to the glory of the sunset, or was it to the glory of Amun, "the hidden one," once the local god of Thebes, to whom the grandest temple in the world was dedicated? I listened to the childish, quavering voice, twittering almost like a bird, and one word alone came up to me—the word one hears in Egypt from all the lips that speak and sing: from the Nubians round their fires at night, from the lithe boatmen of the lower reaches of the Nile, from the Bedouins of the desert, and the donkey boys of the villages, from the sheik who reads one's future in water spilt on a plate, and the Bisharin with buttered curls who runs to sell one beads from his tent among the sand-dunes.

CO
LIBRARY.

THE GREAT TEMPLE OF KARNAK

"Allah!" the child was singing as he passed upon his way.

Pigeons circled above their pretty towers. The bats came out, as if they knew how precious is their black at evening against the ethereal lemon color, the orange, and the red. The little obelisk beyond the last sphinx on the left began to change, as in Egypt all things change at sunset — pylon and dusty bush, colossus and baked earth hovel, sycamore, and tamarisk, statue and trotting donkey. It looked like a mysterious finger pointed in warning toward the sky. The Nile began to gleam. Upon its steel and silver torches of amber flame were lighted. The Libyan mountains became spectral beyond the tombs of the kings. The tiny, rough cupolas that mark a grave close to the sphinxes, in daytime dingy and poor, now seemed made of some splendid material worthy to roof the mummy of a king. Far off a pool of the Nile, that from here looked like a little palm-fringed lake, turned ruby red. The flags from the standards of Luxor, among the minarets, flew out straight against a sky that was pale as a primrose, almost cold in its amazing delicacy.

I turned, and behind me the moon was risen. Already its silver rays fell upon the ruins of Karnak; upon the thickets of lotus columns; upon solitary gateways that now give entrance to no courts; upon the sacred lake, with its reeds, where the black water-fowl were asleep; upon sloping walls, shored up by enor-

mous stanchions, like ribs of some prehistoric leviathan; upon small chambers; upon fallen blocks of masonry, fragments of architrave and pavement, of capital and cornice; and upon the people of Karnak—those fascinating people who still cling to their habitation in the ruins, faithful through misfortune, affectionate with a steadfastness that defies the cruelty of time; upon the little, lonely white sphinx with the woman's face and the downward-sloping eyes full of sleepy seduction; upon Rameses II, with the face of a kindly child, not of a king; upon the sphinx, bereft of its companion, which crouches before the kiosk of Taharga, the king of Ethiopia; upon those two who stand together as if devoted, yet by their attitudes seem to express characters diametrically opposed, gray men and vivid, the one with folded arms calling to Peace, the other with arms stretched down in a gesture of crude determination, summoning War, as if from the under-world; upon the granite foot and ankle in the temple of Rameses III, which in their perfection, like the headless Victory in Paris, and the Niobide Chiaramonti in the Vatican, suggest a great personality, compose a great personality that once met with is not to be forgotten: upon these and their companions, who would not forsake the halls and courts where once they dwelt with splendor, where now they dwell with ruin that attracts the gaping world. The moon was risen, but the west was still full of color and light. It faded. There was a pause.

WO S
LI Y.

From stereograph, copyright by Underwood & Underwood, New York

THE SACRED LOTUS IN THE TEMPLE AT KARNAK

Only a bar of dull red, holding a hint of brown, lay where the sun had sunk. And minutes passed—minutes for me full of silent expectation, while the moonlight grew a little stronger, a few more silver rays slipped down upon the ruins. I turned toward the east. And then came that curious crescendo of color and of light which, in Egypt, succeeds the diminuendo of color and of light that is the prelude to the pause before the afterglow. Everything seemed to be in subtle movement, heaving as a breast heaves with the breath; swelling slightly, as if in an effort to be more, to attract attention, to gain in significance. Pale things became livid, holding apparently some under-brightness which partly penetrated its envelop, but a brightness that was white and almost frightful. Black things seemed to glow with blackness. The air quivered. Its silence surely thrilled with sound—with sound that grew ever louder.

In the east I saw an effect. To the west I turned for the cause. The sunset light was returning. Horus would not permit Tum to reign even for a few brief moments, and Khuns, the sacred god of the moon, would be witness of a conflict in that lovely western region of the ocean of the sky where the bark of the sun had floated away beneath the mountain rim upon the red-and-orange tides. The afterglow was like an exquisite spasm, is always like an exquisite spasm, a beautiful, almost desperate effort ending in the quiet

darkness of defeat. And through that spasmodic effort a world lived for some minutes with a life that seemed unreal, startling, magical. Color returned to the sky—color ethereal, trembling as if it knew it ought not to return. Yet it stayed for a while and even glowed, though it looked always strangely purified, and full of a crystal coldness. The birds that flew against it were no longer birds, but dark, moving ornaments, devised surely by a supreme artist to heighten here and there the beauty of the sky. Everything that moved against the afterglow—man, woman, child, camel and donkey, dog and goat, languishing buffalo, and plunging horse—became at once an ornament, invented, I fancied, by a genius to emphasize, by relieving it, the color in which the sky was drowned. And Khuns watched serenely, as if he knew the end. And almost suddenly the miraculous effort failed. Things again revealed their truth, whether commonplace or not. That pool of the Nile was no more a red jewel set in a feathery pattern of strange design, but only water fading from my sight beyond a group of palms. And that below me was only a camel going homeward, and that a child leading a bronze-colored sheep with a curly coat, and that a dusty flat-roofed hovel, not the fairy home of jinn, or the abode of some magician working marvels with the sun-rays he had gathered in his net. The air was no longer thrilling with music. The breast that had heaved with a divine breath was still as the breast of a corpse.

And Khuns reigned quietly over the plains of Karnak.

Karnak has no distinctive personality. Built under many kings its ruins are as complex as were probably once its completed temples, with their shrines, their towers, their courts, their hypostyle halls. As I looked down that evening in the moonlight I saw, softened and made more touching than in daytime, those alluring complexities, brought by the night and Khuns into a unity that was both tender and superb. Masses of masonry lay jumbled in shadow and in silver; gigantic walls cast sharply defined gloom; obelisks pointed significantly to the sky, seeming, as they always do, to be murmuring a message; huge doorways stood up like giants unafraid of their loneliness and yet pathetic in it; here was a watching statue, there one that seemed to sleep, seen from afar. Yonder Queen Hatshepsu, who wrought wonders at Deir-el-Bahari, and who is more familiar perhaps as Hatasu, had left her traces, and nearer, to the right, Rameses III had made a temple, surely for the birds, so fond they are of it, so pertinaciously they haunt it. Rameses II, mutilated and immense, stood on guard before the terrific hall of Seti I; and between him and my platform in the air rose the solitary lotus column that prepares you for the wonder of Seti's hall, which otherwise might almost overwhelm you—unless you are a Scotch lady in a helmet. And Khuns had his temple here by the Sphinx

of the twelfth Rameses, and Ptah, who created "the sun egg and the moon egg," and who was said—only said, alas!—to have established on earth the "everlasting justice," had his, and still their stones receive the silver moon-rays and wake the wonder of men. Thothmes III, Thothmes I, Shishak, who smote the kneeling prisoners and vanquished Jeroboam, Medamut and Mut, Amenhotep I, and Amenhotep II—all have left their records or been celebrated at Karnak. Purposely I mingled them in my mind—did not attempt to put them in their proper order, or even to disentangle gods and goddesses from conquerors and kings. In the warm and seductive night Khuns whispered to me: "As long ago at Bekhten I exorcized the demon from the suffering Princess, so now I exorcize from these ruins all spirits but my own. To-night these ruins shall suggest nothing but majesty, tranquillity, and beauty. Their records are for Ra, and must be studied by his rays. In mine they shall speak not to the intellect, but only to the emotions and the soul."

And presently I went down, and yielding a complete and happy obedience to Khuns, I wandered alone through the stupendous vestiges of past eras, dead ambitions, vanished glory, and long-outworn belief, and I ignored eras, ambitions, glory, and belief, and thought only of form, and height, of the miracle of blackness against silver, and of the pathos of statues whose ever-open eyes at night, when one is near them,

ENTRANCE TO TEMPLE OF RAMESES III, KARNAK

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

suggest the working of some evil spell, perpetual watchfulness, combined with eternal inactivity, the unslumbering mind caged in the body that is paralyzed.

There is a temple at Karnak that I love, and I scarcely know why I care for it so much. It is on the right of the solitary lotus column before you come to the terrific hall of Seti. Some people pass it by, having but little time, and being hypnotized, it seems, by the more astounding ruin that lies beyond it. And perhaps it would be well, on a first visit, to enter it last; to let its influence be the final one to rest upon your spirit. This is the temple of Rameses III, a brown place of calm and retirement, an ineffable place of peace. Yes, though the birds love it and fill it often with their voices, it is a sanctuary of peace. Upon the floor the soft sand lies, placing silence beneath your footsteps. The pale brown of walls and columns, almost yellow in the sunshine, is delicate and soothing, and inclines the heart to calm. Delicious, suggestive of a beautiful tapestry, rich and ornate, yet always quiet, are the brown reliefs upon the stone. What are they? Does it matter? They soften the walls, make them more personal, more tender. That surely is their mission. This temple holds for me a spell. As soon as I enter it, I feel the touch of the lotus, as if an invisible and kindly hand swept a blossom lightly across my face and downward to my heart. This courtyard, these small chambers beyond it, that last doorway framing a lovely darkness,

soothe me even more than the terra-cotta hermitages of the Certosa of Pavia. And all the statues here are calm with an irrevocable calmness, faithful through passing years with a very sober faithfulness to the temple they adorn. In no other place, one feels it, could they be thus at peace, with hands crossed forever upon their breasts which are torn by no anxieties, thrilled by no joys. As one stands among them, or, sitting on the base of a column in the chamber that lies beyond them, looks on them from a little distance, their attitude is like a summons to men to contend no more, to be still, to enter into rest.

Come to this temple when you leave the hall of Seti. There you are in a place of triumph. Scarlet, some say, is the color of a great note sounded on a bugle. This hall is like a bugle-call of the past, thrilling even now down all the ages with a triumph that is surely greater than any other triumph. It suggests blaze—blaze of scarlet, blaze of bugle, blaze of glory, blaze of life and time, of ambition and achievement. In these columns, in the putting up of them, dead men sought to climb to sun and stars, limitless in desire, limitless in industry, limitless in will. And at the tops of the columns blooms the lotus, the symbol of rising. What a triumph in stone this hall was once, what a triumph in stone its ruin is to-day! Perhaps, among temples, it is the most wondrous thing in all Egypt, as it was no doubt the most wondrous temple in the world;

THE SACRED LAKE, KARNAK

WORK EN'S
COL
LIBRARY.

among temples, I say, for the Sphinx is of all the marvels of Egypt by far the most marvelous. The grandeur of this hall almost moves one to tears, like the marching past of conquerors, stirs the heart with leaping thrills at the capacities of men. Through the thicket of columns, tall as forest trees, the intense blue of the African sky stares down, and their great shadows lie along the warm and sunlit ground. Listen! There are voices chanting. Men are working here—working as men worked how many thousands of years ago. But these are calling upon the Mohammedan's god as they slowly drag to the appointed places the mighty blocks of stone. And it is to-day a Frenchman who oversees them.

"Help! Help! Allah give us help!
Help! Help! Allah give us help!"

The dust flies up about their naked feet. Triumph and work; work succeeded by the triumph all can see. I like to hear the workmen's voices within the hall of Seti. I like to see the dust stirred by their tramping feet.

And then I like to go once more to the little temple, to enter through its defaced gateway, to stand alone in its silence between the rows of statues with their arms folded upon their quiet breasts, to gaze into the tender darkness beyond,—the darkness that looks consecrated,—to feel that peace is more wonderful than triumph, that the end of things is peace.

Triumph and deathless peace, the bugle-call and silence—these are the notes of Karnak.

VIII

LUXOR

UPON the wall of the great court of Amenhotep III in the temple of Luxor there is a delicious dancing procession in honor of Rameses II. It is very funny and very happy; full of the joy of life —a sort of radiant cake-walk of old Egyptian days. How supple are these dancers! They seem to have no bones. One after another they come in line upon the mighty wall, and each one bends backward to the knees of the one who follows. As I stood and looked at them for the first time, almost I heard the twitter of flutes, the rustic wail of the African hautboy, the monotonous boom of the derabukkeh, cries of a far-off gaiety such as one often hears from the Nile by night. But these cries came down the long avenues of the centuries; this gaiety was distant in the vasty halls of the long-dead years. Never can I think of Luxor without thinking of those happy dancers, without thinking of the life that goes in the sun on dancing feet.

There are a few places in the world that one associates with happiness, that one remembers always with a smile, a little thrill at the heart that whispers, "There

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From stereograph, copyright, 1904, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

THE TEMPLE OF LUXOR FROM THE EASTERLY PYLON

joy is." Of these few places Luxor is one—Luxor the home of sunshine, the suave abode of light, of warmth, of the sweet days of gold and sheeny, golden sunsets, of silver, shimmering nights through which the songs of the boatmen of the Nile go floating to the courts and the tombs of Thebes. The roses bloom in Luxor under the mighty palms. Always surely beneath the palms there are the roses. And the lateen-sails come up the Nile, looking like white-winged promises of future golden days. And at dawn one wakes with hope and hears the songs of the dawn; and at noon one dreams of the happiness to come; and at sunset one is swept away on the gold into the heart of the golden world; and at night one looks at the stars, and each star is a twinkling hope. Soft are the airs of Luxor; there is no harshness in the wind that stirs the leaves of the palms. And the land is steeped in light. From Luxor one goes with regret. One returns to it with joy on dancing feet.

One day I sat in the temple, in the huge court with the great double row of columns that stands on the banks of the Nile and looks so splendid from it. The pale brown of the stone became almost yellow in the sunshine. From the river, hidden from me, stole up the songs of the boatmen. Nearer at hand I heard pigeons cooing, cooing in the sun, as if almost too glad, and seeking to manifest their gladness. Behind me, through the columns, peeped some houses of the vil-

lage: the white home of Ibrahim Ayyad, the perfect dragoman, grandson of Mustapha Aga, who entertained me years ago, and whose house stood actually within the precincts of the temple; houses of other fortunate dwellers in Luxor whose names I do not know. For the village of Luxor crowds boldly about the temple, and the children play in the dust almost at the foot of obelisks and statues. High on a brown hump of earth a buffalo stood alone, languishing serenely in the sun, gazing at me through the columns with light eyes that were full of a sort of folly of contentment. Some goats tripped by, brown against the brown stone—the dark brown earth of the native houses. Intimate life was here, striking the note of the coziness of Luxor. Here was none of the sadness and the majesty of Denderah. Grand are the ruins of Luxor, noble is the line of columns that boldly fronts the Nile; but Time has given them naked to the air and to the sun, to children and to animals. Instead of bats, the pigeons fly about them. There is no dreadful darkness in their sanctuaries. Before them the life of the river, behind them the life of the village flows and stirs. Upon them looks down the Minaret of Abu Haggag; and as I sat in the sunshine, the warmth of which began to lessen, I saw upon its lofty circular balcony the figure of the muezzin. He leaned over, bending toward the temple and the statues of Rameses II and the happy dancers on the wall. He opened his lips and cried to them:

THE COURT OF AMENHOTEP III, TEMPLE OF LUXOR

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

"God is great. God is great. . . . I bear witness that there is no god but God. . . . I bear witness that Mohammed is the Apostle of God. . . . Come to prayer! Come to prayer! . . . God is great. God is great. There is no god but God."

He circled round the minaret. He cried to the Nile. He cried to the Colossi sitting in their plain, and to the yellow precipices of the mountains of Libya. He cried to Egypt:

"Come to prayer! Come to prayer! There is no god but God. There is no god but God."

The days of the gods were dead, and their ruined temple echoed with the proclamation of the one God of the Moslem world. "Come to prayer! Come to prayer!" The sun began to sink.

Sunset and evening star, and one clear call for me.

The voice of the muezzin died away. There was a silence; and then, as if in answer to the cry from the minaret, I heard the chime of the angelus bell from the Catholic church of Luxor.

Twilight and evening bell, and after that the dark.

I sat very still. The light was fading; all the yellow was fading, too, from the columns and the temple walls. I stayed till it was dark; and with the dark the old gods seemed to resume their interrupted sway. And surely they, too, called to prayer. For do not these ruins of old Egypt, like the muezzin upon the minaret,

like the angelus bell in the church tower, call one to prayer in the night? So wonderful are they under stars and moon that they stir the fleshly and the worldly desires that lie like drifted leaves about the reverence and the aspiration that are the hidden core of the heart. And it is released from its burden; and it awakes and prays.

Amun-Ra, Mut, and Khuns, the king of the gods, his wife, mother of gods, and the moon god, were the Theban triad to whom the holy buildings of Thebes on the two banks of the Nile were dedicated; and this temple of Luxor, the "House of Amun in the Southern Apt," was built fifteen hundred years before Christ by Amenhotep III. Rameses II, that vehement builder, added to it immensely. One walks among his traces when one walks in Luxor. And here, as at Denderah, Christians have let loose the fury that should have had no place in their religion. Churches for their worship they made in different parts of the temple, and when they were not praying, they broke in pieces statues, defaced bas-reliefs, and smashed up shrines with a vigor quite as great as that displayed in preservation by Christians of to-day. Now time has called a truce. Safe are the statues that are left. And day by day two great religions, almost as if in happy brotherly love, send forth their summons by the temple walls. And just beyond those walls, upon the hill, there is a Coptic church. Peace reigns in happy Luxor. The lion lies

IN THE TEMPLE OF LUXOR

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

From stereograph, copyright by Underwood & Underwood, New York

down with the lamb, and the child, if it will, may harmlessly put its hand into the cockatrice's den.

Perhaps because it is so surrounded, so haunted by life and familiar things, because the pigeons fly about it, the buffalo stares into it, the goats stir up the dust beside its columns, the twittering voices of women make a music near its courts, many people pay little heed to this great temple, gain but a small impression from it. It decorates the bank of the Nile. You can see it from the dahabiyehs. For many that is enough. Yet the temple is a noble one, and, for me, it gains a definite attraction all its own from the busy life about it, the cheerful hum and stir. And if you want fully to realize its dignity, you can always visit it by night. Then the cries from the village are hushed. The houses show no lights. Only the voices from the Nile steal up to the obelisk of Rameses, to the pylon from which the flags of Thebes once flew on festal days, to the shrine of Alexander the Great, with its vultures and its stars, and to the red granite statues of Rameses and his wives.

These last are as expressive and of course more definite than my dancers. They are full of character. They seem to breathe out the essence of a vanished domesticity. Colossal are the statues of the king, solid, powerful, and tremendous, boldly facing the world with the calm of one who was thought, and possibly thought himself, to be not much less than a deity. And

upon each pedestal, shrinking delicately back, was once a little wife. Some little wives are left. They are delicious in their modesty. Each stands away from the king, shyly, respectfully. Each is so small as to be below his down-stretched arm. Each, with a surely furtive gesture, reaches out her right hand, and attains the swelling calf of her noble husband's leg. Plump are their little faces, but not bad-looking. One cannot pity the king. Nor does one pity them. For these were not "Les désenchantées," the restless, sad-hearted women of an Eastern world that knows too much. Their longings surely cannot have been very great. Their world was probably bounded by the calf of Rameses's leg. That was "the far horizon" of the little plump-faced wives.

The happy dancers and the humble wives, they always come before me with the temple of Luxor—joy and discretion side by side. And with them, to my ears, the two voices seem to come, muezzin and angelus bell, mingling not in war, but peace. When I think of this temple, I think of its joy and peace far less than of its majesty.

And yet it is majestic. Look at it, as I have often done, toward sunset from the western bank of the Nile, or climb the mound beyond its northern end, where stands the grand entrance, and you realize at once its nobility and solemn splendor. From the *Loulia's* deck it was a procession of great columns; that was all.

WORKI' G MEN'S
COL E
LIBRARY

From a photograph by James S Lee

OBELISK AND PYLON, LUXOR

But the decorative effect of these columns, soaring above the river and its vivid life, is fine.

By day all is turmoil on the river-bank. Barges are unloading, steamers are arriving, and throngs of donkey-boys and dragomans go down in haste to meet them. Servants run to and fro on errands from the many dahabiyehs. Bathers leap into the brown waters. The native craft pass by with their enormous sails outspread to catch the wind, bearing serried mobs of men, and black-robed women, and laughing, singing children. The boatmen of the hotels sing monotonously as they lounge in the big, white boats waiting for travelers to Medinet-Abu, to the Ramesseum, to Kurna, and the tombs. And just above them rise the long lines of columns, ancient, tranquil, and remote—infinitely remote, for all their nearness, casting down upon the sunlit gaiety the long shadow of the past.

From the edge of the mound where stands the native village the effect of the temple is much less decorative, but its detailed grandeur can be better grasped from there; for from there one sees the great towers of the propylon, two rows of mighty columns, the red granite Obelisk of Rameses the Great, and the black granite statues of the king. On the right of the entrance a giant stands, on the left one is seated, and a little farther away a third emerges from the ground, which reaches to its mighty breast.

And there the children play perpetually. And there

the Egyptians sing their serenades, making the pipes wail and striking the derabukkeh; and there the women gossip and twitter like the birds. And the buffalo comes to take his sun-bath; and the goats and the curly, brown sheep pass in sprightly and calm processions. The obelisk there, like its brother in Paris, presides over a cheerfulness of life; but it is a life that seems akin to it, not alien from it. And the king watches the simplicity of this keen existence of Egypt of to-day far up the Nile with a calm that one does not fear may be broken by unsympathetic outrage, or by any vision of too perpetual foreign life. For the tourists each year are but an episode in Upper Egypt. Still the shadoof-man sings his ancient song, violent and pathetic, bold as the burning sun-rays. Still the fellaheen plow with the camel yoked with the ox. Still the women are covered with protective amulets and hold their black draperies in their mouths. The intimate life of the Nile remains the same. And that life obelisk and king have known for how many, many years!

And so I love to think of this intimacy of life about the temple of the happy dancers and the humble little wives, and it seems to me to strike the keynote of the golden coziness of Luxor.

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE
104
LIBRARY

THE GREAT COLONNADE, TEMPLE OF LUXOR

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

IX

COLOSSI OF MEMNON

NEVERTHELESS, sometimes one likes to escape from the thing one loves, and there are hours when the gay voices of Luxor fatigue the ears, when one desires a great calm. Then there are silent voices that summon one across the river, when the dawn is breaking over the hills of the Arabian desert, or when the sun is declining toward the Libyan mountains—voices issuing from lips of stone, from the twilight of sanctuaries, from the depths of rock-hewn tombs.

The peace of the plain of Thebes in the early morning is very rare and very exquisite. It is not the peace of the desert, but rather, perhaps, the peace of the prairie—an atmosphere tender, delicately thrilling, softly bright, hopeful in its gleaming calm. Often and often have I left the *Loulia* very early, moored against the long sand islet that faces Luxor when the Nile has not subsided, I have rowed across the quiet water that divided me from the western bank, and, with a happy heart, I have entered into the lovely peace of the great spaces that stretch from the Colossi of Memnon to the

Nile, to the mountains, southward toward Armant, northward to Kerekten, to Danfik, to Gueziret-Meteira. Think of the color of young clover, of young barley, of young wheat; think of the timbre of the reed flute's voice, thin, clear, and frail with the frailty of dewdrops; think of the torrents of spring rushing through the veins of a great, wide land, and growing almost still at last on their journey. Spring, you will say, perhaps, and high Nile not yet subsided! But Egypt is the favored land of a spring that is already alert at the end of November, and in December is pushing forth its green. The Nile has sunk away from the feet of the Colossi that it has bathed through many days. It has freed the plain to the fellaheen, though still it keeps my island in its clasp. And Hapi, or Kam-wra, the "Great Extender," and Ra, have made this wonderful spring to bloom on the dark earth before the Christian's Christmas.

What a pastoral it is, this plain of Thebes, in the dawn of day! Think of the reed flute, I have said, not because you will hear it, as you ride toward the mountains, but because its voice would be utterly in place here, in this arcady of Egypt, playing no tarantella, but one of those songs, half bird-like, and half sadly, mysteriously human, which come from the soul of the East. Instead of it, you may catch distant cries from the bank of the river, where the shadoof-man toils, lifting ever the water and his voice, the one to

NEAR VIEW OF THE COLOSSI OF MEMNON

From stereograph, copyright, 1908, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

earth, the other, it seems, to sky; and the creaking lay of the water-wheel, which pervades Upper Egypt like an atmosphere, and which, though perhaps at first it irritates, at last seems to you the sound of the soul of the river, of the sunshine, and the soil.

Much of the land looks painted. So flat is it, so young are the growing crops, that they are like a coating of green paint spread over a mighty canvas. But the doura rises higher than the heads of the naked children who stand among it to watch you canter past. And in the far distance you see dim groups of trees—sycamores and acacias, tamarisks and palms. Beyond them is the very heart of this "land of sand and ruins and gold": Medinet-Abu, the Ramesseum, Deir-el-Medinet, Kurna, Deir-el-Bahari, the tombs of the kings, the tombs of the queens and of the princes. In the strip of bare land at the foot of those hard, and yet poetic, mountains, have been dug up treasures the fame of which has gone to the ends of the world. But this plain, where the fellaheen are stooping to the soil, and the women are carrying the water-jars, and the children are playing in the doura, and the oxen and the camels are working with plows that look like relics of far-off days, is the possession of the two great presiding beings whom you see from an enormous distance, the Colossi of Memnon. Amenhotep III put them where they are. So we are told. But in this early morning it is not possible to think of them as being brought to any

place. Seated, the one beside the other, facing the Nile and the home of the rising sun, their immense aspect of patience suggests will, calmly, steadily exercised, suggests choice; that, for some reason, as yet unknown, they chose to come to this plain, that they choose solemnly to remain there, waiting, while the harvests grow and are gathered about their feet, while the Nile rises and subsides, while the years and the generations come, like the harvests, and are stored away in the granaries of the past. Their calm broods over this plain, gives to it a personal atmosphere which sets it quite apart from every other flat space of the world. There is no place that I know on the earth which has the peculiar, bright, ineffable calm of the plain of these Colossi. It takes you into its breast, and you lie there in the growing sunshine almost as if you were a child laid in the lap of one of them. That legend of the singing at dawn of the "vocal Memnon," how could it have arisen? How could such calmness sing, such patience ever find a voice? Unlike the Sphinx, which becomes ever more impressive as you draw near to it, and is most impressive when you sit almost at its feet, the Colossi lose in personality as you approach them and can see how they have been defaced.

From afar one feels their minds, their strange, unearthly temperaments commanding this pastoral. When you are beside them, this feeling disappears. Their features are gone, and though in their attitudes there is

WORKI... EN'S
COL
LIB... Y.

THE COLOSSI OF MEMNON

power, and there is something that wakens awe, they are more wonderful as a far-off feature of the plain. They gain in grandeur from the night, in strangeness from the moonrise, perhaps specially when the Nile comes to their feet. More than three thousand years old, they look less eternal than the Sphinx. Like them, the Sphinx is waiting, but with a greater purpose. The Sphinx reduces man really to nothingness. The Colossi leave him some remnants of individuality. One can conceive of Strabo and Ælius Gallus, of Hadrian and Sabina, of others who came over the sunlit land to hear the unearthly song in the dawn, being of some—not much, but still of some—importance here. Before the Sphinx no one is important. But in the distance of the plain the Colossi shed a real magic of calm and solemn personality, and subtly seem to mingle their spirit with the flat, green world, so wide, so still, so fecund, and so peaceful; with the soft airs that are surely scented with an eternal springtime, and with the light that the morning rains down on wheat and clover, on Indian corn and barley, and on brown men laboring, who, perhaps, from the patience of the Colossi in repose have drawn a patience in labor that has in it something not less sublime.

From the Colossi one goes onward toward the trees and the mountains, and very soon one comes to the edge of that strange and fascinating strip of barren land which is strewn with temples and honeycombed with

tombs. The sun burns down on it. The heat seems thrown back upon it by the wall of tawny mountains that bounds it on the west. It is dusty, it is arid; it is haunted by swarms of flies, by the guardians of the ruins, and by men and boys trying to sell enormous scarabs and necklaces and amulets, made yesterday, and the day before, in the manufactory of Kurna. From many points it looks not unlike a strangely prolonged rubbish-heap in which busy giants have been digging with huge spades, making mounds and pits, caverns and trenches, piling up here a monstrous heap of stones, casting down there a mighty statue. But how it fascinates! Of course one knows what it means. One knows that on this strip of land Naville dug out at Deir-el-Bahari the temple of Mentu-hotep, and discovered later, in her shrine, Hathor, the cow-goddess, with the lotus-plants streaming from her sacred forehead to her feet; that long before him Mariette here brought to the light at Drah-abu'l-Neggah the treasures of kings of the twelfth and thirteenth dynasties; that at the foot of those tiger-colored precipices, Theodore M. Davis, the American, found the sepulcher of Queen Hatshepsu, the Queen Elizabeth of the old Egyptian world, and, later, the tomb of Yuaa and Thuaa, the parents of Queen Thiy, containing mummy-cases covered with gold, jars of oil and wine, gold, silver, and alabaster boxes, a bed decorated with gilded ivory, a chair with gilded plaster reliefs, chairs of state, and

THE VALLEY OF THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From stereograph, copyright, 1904, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

a chariot; that here Maspero, Victor Loret, Brugsch Bey, and other patient workers gave to the world tombs that had been hidden and unknown for centuries; that there to the north is the temple of Kurna, and over there the Ramesseum; that those rows of little pillars close under the mountain, and looking strangely modern, are the pillars of Hatshepsu's temple, which bears upon its walls the pictures of the expedition to the historic land of Punt; that the kings were buried there, and there the queens and the princes of the vanished dynasties; that beyond to the west is the temple of Deir-el-Medinet with its judgment of the dead; that here by the native village is Medinet-Abu. One knows that, and so the imagination is awake, ready to paint the lily and to gild the beaten gold. But even if one did not know, I think one would be fascinated. This turmoil of sunbaked earth and rock, gray, yellow, pink, orange, and red, awakens the curiosity, summons the love of the strange, suggests that it holds secrets to charm the souls of men.

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE LIBRARY.

X

MEDINET-ABU

AT the entrance to the temple of Medinet-Abu, near the small groups of palms and the few brown houses, often have I turned and looked back across the plain before entering through the first beautiful doorway, to see the patient backs and right sides of the colossi, the far-off, dreamy mountains beyond Karnak and the Nile. And again, when I have entered and walked a little distance, I have looked back at the almost magical picture framed in the doorway; at the bottom of the picture a layer of brown earth, then a strip of sharp green,—the cultivated ground,—then a blur of pale yellow, then a darkness of trees, and just the hint of a hill far, very far away. And always, in looking, I have thought of the "Sposalizio" of Raphael in the Brera at Milan, of the tiny dream of blue country framed by his temple doorway beyond the Virgin and Saint Joseph. The doorways of the temples of Egypt are very noble, and nowhere have I been more struck by their nobility than in Medinet-Abu. Set in huge walls of massive masonry, which rise slightly above them on each side,

WO... ...'S
L... Y.

THE TEMPLE OF MEDINET-ABU

with a projecting cornice, in their simplicity they look extraordinarily classical, in their sobriety mysterious, and in their great solidity quite wonderfully elegant. And they always suggest to me that they are giving access to courts and chambers which still, even in our times, are dedicated to secret cults — to the cults of Isis, of Hathor, and of Osiris.

Close to the right of the front of Medinet-Abu there are trees covered with yellow flowers; beyond are fields of doura. Behind the temple is a sterility which makes one think of metal. A great calm enfolds this place. The buildings are of the same color as the colossi. When I speak of the buildings, I include the great temple, the pavilion of Rameses III, and the little temple, which together may be said to form Medinet-Abu. Whereas the temple of Luxor seems to open its arms to life, and the great fascination of the Rameseum comes partly from its invasion by every traveling air and happy sun-ray, its openness and freedom, Medinet-Abu impresses by its colossal air of secrecy, by its fortress-like seclusion. Its walls are immensely thick, and are covered with figures the same color as the walls, some of them very tall. Thick set, massive, heavy, almost warlike it is. Two seated statues within, statues with animals' faces, steel-colored, or perhaps a little darker than that, look like savage warders ready to repel intrusion.

Passing between them, delicately as Agag, one enters

an open space with ruins, upon the right of which is a low, small temple, gray in hue, and covered with inscriptions, which looks almost bowed under its tremendous weight of years. From this dignified, though tiny, veteran there comes a perpetual sound of birds. The birds in Egypt have no reverence for age. Never have I seen them more restless, more gay, or more impertinent, than in the immemorial ruins of this ancient land. Beyond is an enormous portal, on the lofty ceiling of which still linger traces of faded red and blue, which gives access to a great hall with rows of mighty columns, those on the left hand round, those on the right square, and almost terribly massive. There is in these no grace, as in the giant lotus columns of Karnak. Prodigious, heavy, barbaric, they are like a hymn in stone to strength. There is something brutal in their aspect, which again makes one think of war, of assaults repelled, hordes beaten back like waves by a sea-wall. And still another great hall, with more gigantic columns, lies in the sun beyond, and a doorway through which seems to stare fiercely the edge of a hard and fiery mountain. Although one is roofed by the sky, there is something oppressive here; an imprisoned feeling comes over one. I could never be fond of Medinet-Abu, as I am fond of Luxor, of parts of Karnak, of the whole of delicious, poetical Philæ. The big pylons, with their great walls sloping inward, sand-colored, and glowing with very pale yellow in the sun, the re-

CORNER OF SECOND COURT, TEMPLE OF RAMESES III,
MEDINET-ABU

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From a photograph by James S. Lee

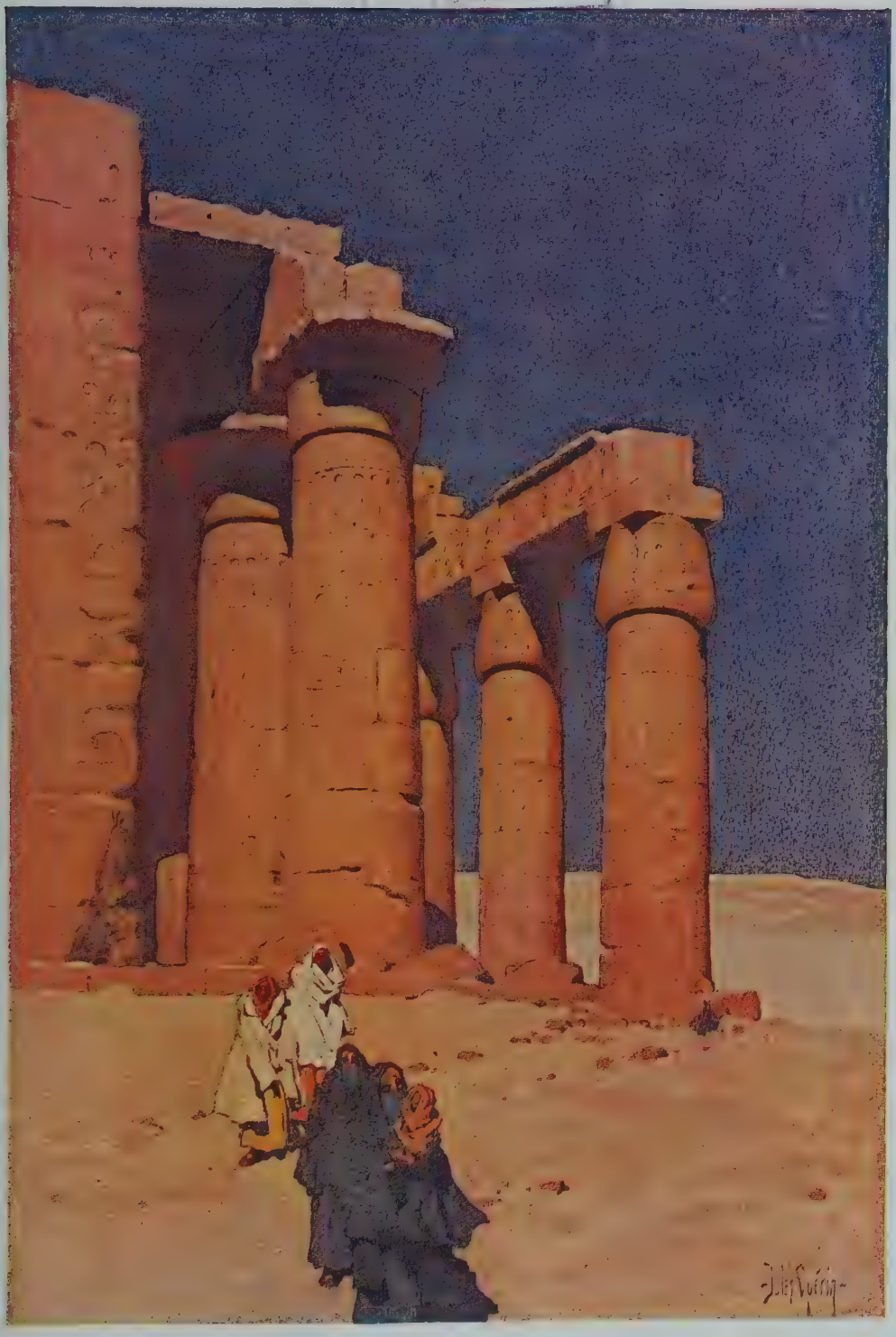
sistant walls, the brutal columns, the huge and almost savage scale of everything, always remind me of the violence in men, and also—I scarcely know why—make me think of the North, of sullen Northern castles by the sea, in places where skies are gray, and the white of foam and snow is married in angry nights.

And yet in Medinet-Abu there reigns a splendid calm—a calm that sometimes seems massive, resistant, as the columns and the walls. Peace is certainly inclosed by the stones that call up thoughts of war, as if, perhaps, their purpose had been achieved many centuries ago, and they were quit of enemies forever. Rameses III is connected with Medinet-Abu. He was one of the greatest of the Egyptian kings, and has been called the "last of the great sovereigns of Egypt." He ruled for thirty-one years, and when, after a first visit to Medinet-Abu, I looked into his records, I was interested to find that his conquests and his wars had "a character essentially defensive." This defensive spirit is incarnated in the stones of these ruins. One reads in them something of the soul of this king who lived twelve hundred years before Christ, and who desired "in remembrance of his Syrian victories" to give to his memorial temple an outward military aspect. I noticed a military aspect at once inside this temple; but if you circle the buildings outside it is more unmistakable. For the east front has a battlemented wall, and the battlements are shield-shaped. This

fortress, or migdol, a name which the ancient Egyptians borrowed from the nomadic tribes of Syria, is called the "Pavilion of Rameses III," and his principal battles are represented upon its walls. The monarch does not hesitate to speak of himself in terms of praise, suggesting that he was like the God Mentu, who was the Egyptian war god, and whose cult at Thebes was at one period more important even than was the cult of Amun, and also plainly hinting that he was a brave fellow. "I, Rameses the King," he murmurs, "behaved as a hero who knows his worth." If hieroglyphs are to be trusted, various Egyptian kings of ancient times seem to have had some vague suspicion of their own value, and the walls of Medinet-Abu are, to speak sincerely, one mighty boast. In his later years the king lived in peace and luxury, surrounded by a vicious and intriguing court haunted by magicians, hags, and mystery-mongers. Dealers in magic may still be found on the other side of the river, in happy Luxor. I made the acquaintance of two when I was there, one of whom offered for a couple of pounds to provide me with a preservative against all such dangers as beset the traveler in wild places. In order to prove its efficacy he asked me to come to his house by night, bringing a dog and my revolver with me. He would hang the charm about the dog's neck, and I was then to put six shots into the animal's body. He positively assured me that the dog would be uninjured. I half-promised

THE RAMESSEUM

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.



to come, and, when night began to fall, looked vaguely about for a dog. At last I found one, but it howled so dismally, when I asked Ibrahim Ayyad to take possession of it for experimental purposes, that I weakly gave up the project, and left the magician clamoring for his hundred and ninety-five piasters.

Its warlike aspect gives a special personality to Medinet-Abu. The shield-shaped battlements; the court-yards, with their brutal columns, narrowing as they recede toward the mountains; the heavy gateways, with superimposed chambers; the towers; quadrangular bastion to protect, inclined basement to resist the attacks of sappers and cause projectiles to rebound—all these things contribute to this very definite effect.

I have heard travelers on the Nile speak piteously of the confusion wakened in their minds by a hurried survey of many temples, statues, monuments, and tombs. But if one stays long enough this confusion fades happily away, and one differentiates between the antique personalities of ancient Egypt almost as easily as one differentiates between the personalities of one's familiar friends. Among these personalities Medinet-Abu is the warrior, standing like Mentu, with the solar disk, and the two plumes erect above his head of a hawk, firmly planted at the foot of the Theban mountains, ready to repel all enemies, to beat back all assaults, strong and determined, powerful and brutally serene.

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

XI

THE RAMESSEUM

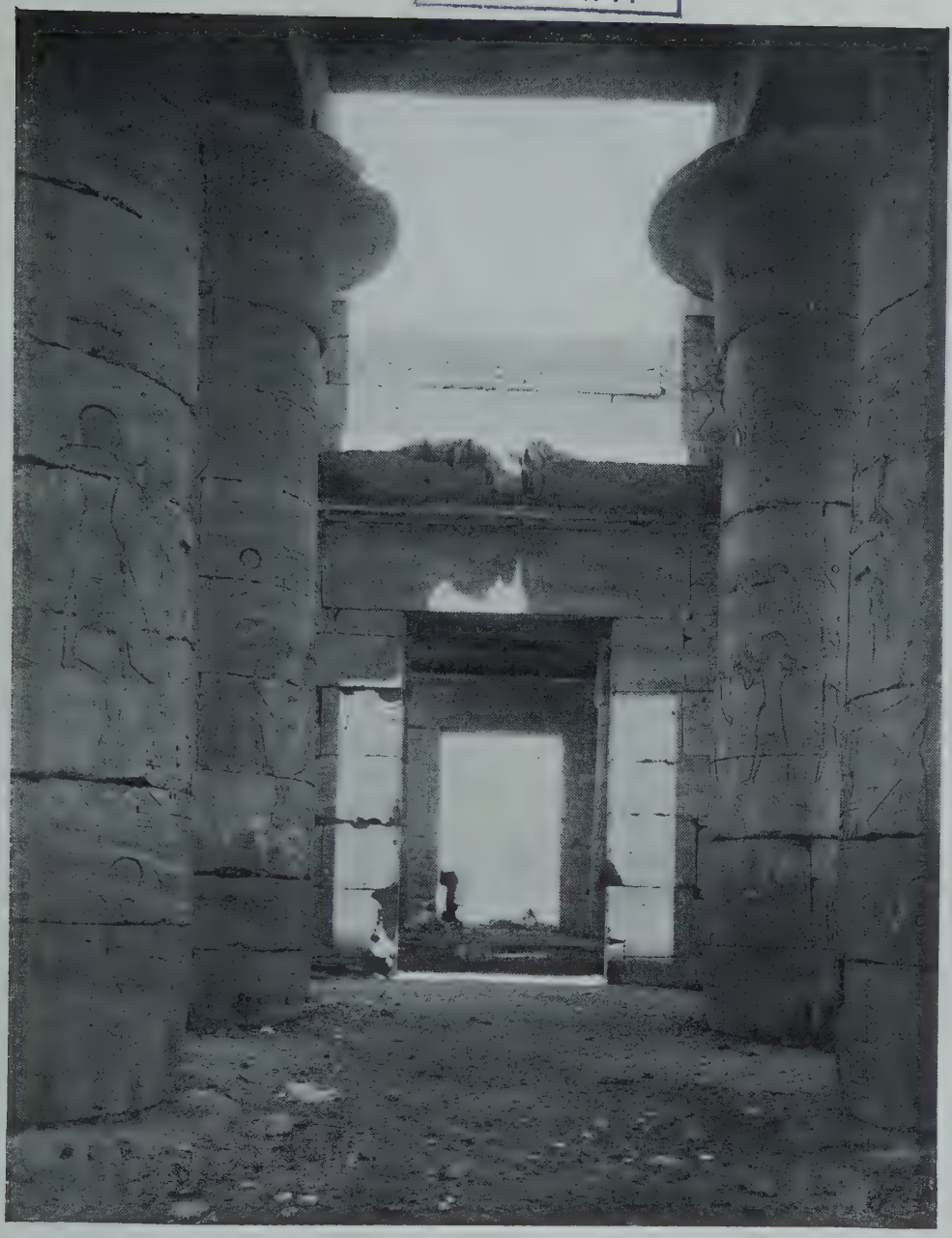
"THIS, my lord, is the thinking place of Rameses the Great."

So said Ibrahim Ayyad to me one morning —Ibrahim who is almost as prolific in the abrupt creation of peers as if he were a democratic government.

I looked about me. We stood in a ruined hall with columns, architraves covered with inscriptions, segments of flat roof. Here and there traces of painting, dull-red, pale, ethereal blue,—the "love-color" of Egypt, as the Egyptians often call it,—still adhered to the stone. This hall, dignified, grand, but happy, was open on all sides to the sun and air. From it I could see tamarisk and acacia-trees, and far-off shadowy mountains beyond the eastern verge of the Nile. And the trees were still as carven things in an atmosphere that was a miracle of clearness and of purity. Behind me, and near, the hard Libyan mountains gleamed in the sun. Somewhere a boy was singing; and suddenly his singing died away. And I thought of the "Lay of the Harper" which is inscribed upon the

"THE THINKING PLACE OF RAMESES THE GREAT,"
HALL OF LOTUS COLUMNS, RAMESSEUM

WORKING[illegible]N'S
COL[illegible]
LIBRARY.



tombs of Thebes—those tombs under those gleaming mountains:

> For no one carries away his goods with him;
> Yea, no one returns again who has gone thither.

It took the place of the song that had died as I thought of the great king's glory; that he had been here, and had long since passed away.

"The thinking place of Rameses the Great!"

"Suttinly."

"You must leave me alone here, Ibrahim."

I watched his gold-colored robe vanish into the gold of the sun through the copper color of the columns. And I was quite alone in the "thinking place" of Rameses. It was a brilliant day, the sky dark sapphire blue, without even the specter of a cloud, or any airy, vaporous veil; the heat already intense in the full sunshine, but delicious, if one slid into a shadow. I slid into a shadow, and sat down on a warm block of stone. And the silence flowed upon me—the silence of the Ramesseum.

Was *Horbehutet*, the winged disk, with crowned *uraei*, ever set up above this temple's principal door to keep it from destruction? I do not know. But, if he was, he failed perfectly to fulfil his mission. And I am glad he failed. I am glad of the ruin that is here, glad that walls have crumbled or been overthrown, that columns have been cast down, and ceilings torn off

from the pillars that supported them, letting in the sky. I would have nothing different in the thinking place of Rameses.

Like a cloud, a great golden cloud, a glory impending that will not, cannot, be dissolved into the ether, he loomed over the Egypt that is dead, he looms over the Egypt of to-day. Everywhere you meet his traces, everywhere you hear his name. You say to a tall young Egyptian: "How big you are growing, Hassan!"

He answers, "Come back next year, my gentleman, and I shall be like Rameses the Great."

Or you ask of the boatman who rows you, "How can you pull all day against the current of the Nile?" And he smiles, and lifting his brown arm, he says to you: "Look! I am as strong as Rameses the Great."

This familiar fame comes down through some three thousand, two hundred, and twenty years. Carved upon limestone and granite, now it seems engraven also on every Egyptian heart that beats not only with the movement of shadoof, or is not buried in the black soil fertilized by Hapi. Thus can inordinate vanity prolong the true triumph of genius, and impress its own view of itself upon the minds of millions. This Rameses is believed to be the Pharaoh who oppressed the children of Israel.

As I sat in the Ramesseum that morning, I recalled his face—the face of an artist and a dreamer rather

THE PLAIN OF THEBES FROM THE ROOF OF THE RAMESSEUM

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From stereograph, copyright, 1908 by Underwood & Underwood, New York

than that of a warrior and oppressor; Asiatic, handsome, not insensitive, not cruel, but subtle, aristocratic, and refined. I could imagine it bending above the little serpents of the sistrum as they lifted their melodious voices to bid Typhon depart, or watching the dancing women's rhythmic movements, or smiling half kindly, half with irony, upon the lovelorn maiden who made her plaint:

> "What is sweet to the mouth, to me is as the gall of birds;
> Thy breath alone can comfort my heart."

And I could imagine it looking profoundly grave, not sad, among the columns with their opening lotus flowers. For it is the hall of the lotus columns that Ibrahim calls the thinking place of the king.

There is something both lovely and touching to me in the lotus columns of Egypt, in the tall masses of stone opening out into flowers near the sun. Near the sun! Yes; only that obvious falsehood will convey to those who have not seen them the effect of some of the hypostyle halls, the columns of which seem literally soaring to the sky. And flowers of stone, you will say, rudely carved and rugged! That does not matter. There was poetry in the minds that conceived them, in the thought that directed the hands which shaped them and placed them where they are. In Egypt perpetually one feels how the ancient Egyptians loved the *Nymphæa Lotus*, which is the white lotus, and the *Nymphæa*

cærulæa, the lotus that is blue. Did they not place Horus in its cup, and upon the head of Nefer-Tum, the nature god, who represented in their mythology the heat of the rising sun, and who seems to have been credited with power to grant life in the world to come, set it as a sort of regal ornament? To Seti I, when he returned in glory from his triumphs over the Syrians, were given bouquets of lotus blossoms by the great officers of his household. The tiny column of green feldspar ending in the lotus typified eternal youth, even as the carnelian buckle typified the blood of Isis, which washed away all sin. Kohl pots were fashioned in the form of the lotus, cartouches sprang from it, wine flowed from cups shaped like it. The lotus was part of the very life of Egypt, as the rose, the American beauty rose, is part of our social life of to-day. And here, in the Ramesseum, I found campaniform, or lotus-flower capitals on the columns—here where Rameses once perhaps dreamed of his Syrian campaigns, or of that famous combat when, "like Baal in his fury," he fought single-handed against the host of the Hittites massed in two thousand, five hundred chariots to overthrow him.

The Ramesseum is a temple not of winds, but of soft and kindly airs. There comes Zephyrus, whispering love to Flora incarnate in the Lotus. To every sunbeam, to every little breeze, the ruins stretch out arms. They adore the deep-blue sky, the shining,

HALL OF LOTUS COLUMNS, RAMESSEUM

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

sifted sand, untrammeled nature, all that whispers, "Freedom."

So I felt that day when Ibrahim left me, so I feel always when I sit in the Ramesseum, that exultant victim of Time's here not sacrilegious hand.

All strong souls cry out secretly for liberty as for a sacred necessity of life. Liberty seems to drench the Ramesseum. And all strong souls must exult there. The sun has taken it as a beloved possession. No massy walls keep him out. No shield-shaped battlements rear themselves up against the outer world as at Medinet-Abu. No huge pylons cast down upon the ground their forms in darkness. The stone glows with the sun, seems almost to have a soul glowing with the sense, the sun-ray sense, of freedom. The heart leaps up in the Ramesseum not frivolously, but with a strange, sudden knowledge of the depths of passionate joy there are in life and in bountiful, glorious nature. Instead of the strength of a prison, one feels the ecstasy of space; instead of the safety of inclosure, the rapture of naked publicity. But the public to whom this place of the great king is consigned is a public of Theban hills; of the sunbeams striking from them over the wide world toward the east; of light airs, of drifting sand grains, of singing birds, and of butterflies with pure white wings. If you have ever ridden an Arab horse, mounted in the heart of an oasis, to the verge of the great desert, you will remember the bound, thrilling

with fiery animation, which he gives when he sets his feet on the sand beyond the last tall date-palms. A bound like that the soul gives when you sit in the Ramesseum, and see the crowding sunbeams, the far-off groves of palm-trees, and the drowsy mountains, like shadows, that sleep beyond the Nile. And you look up, perhaps, as I looked that morning, and upon a lotus column near you, relieved, you perceive the figure of a young man singing.

A young man singing! Let him be the tutelary god of this place, whoever he be, whether only some humble, happy slave, or the "superintendent of song and of the recreation of the king." Rather even than Amun-Ra let him be the god. For there is something nobly joyous in this architecture, a dignity that sings.

It has been said, but not established, that Rameses the Great was buried in the Ramesseum, and when first I entered it the "Lay of the Harper" came to my mind, with the sadness that attends the passing away of glory into the shades of death. But an optimism almost as determined as Emerson's was quickly bred in me there. I could not be sad, though I could be happily thoughtful, in the light of the Ramesseum. And even when I left the thinking place, and, coming down the central aisle, saw in the immersing sunshine of the Osiride Court the fallen colossus of the king, I was not struck to sadness.

Imagine the greatest figure in the world,—such a fig-

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From stereograph, copyright by Underwood & Underwood, New York

PILASTERS AND BROKEN COLOSSAL STATUE OF RAMESES II

ure as this Rameses was in his day,— with all might, all glory, all climbing power, all vigor, tenacity of purpose, and granite strength of will concentrated within it, struck suddenly down, and falling backward in a collapse of which the thunder might shake the vitals of the earth, and you have this prostrate colossus. Even now one seems to hear it fall, to feel the warm soil trembling beneath one's feet as one approaches it. A row of statues of enormous size, with arms crossed as if in resignation, glowing in the sun, in color not gold or amber, but a delicate, desert yellow, watch near it like servants of the dead. On a slightly lower level than theirs it lies, and a little nearer the Nile. Only the upper half of the figure is left, but its size is really terrific. This colossus was fifty-seven feet high. It weighed eight hundred tons. Eight hundred tons of syenite went to its making, and across the shoulders its breadth is, or was, over twenty-two feet. But one does not think of measurements as one looks upon it. It is stupendous. That is obvious and that is enough. Nor does one think of its finish, of its beautiful, rich color, of any of its details. One thinks of it as a tremendous personage laid low, as the mightiest of the mighty fallen. One thinks of it as the dead Rameses whose glory still looms over Egypt like a golden cloud that will not disperse. One thinks of it as the soul that commanded, and, lo! there rose up above the sands, at the foot of the hills of Thebes, the exultant Ramesseum.

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

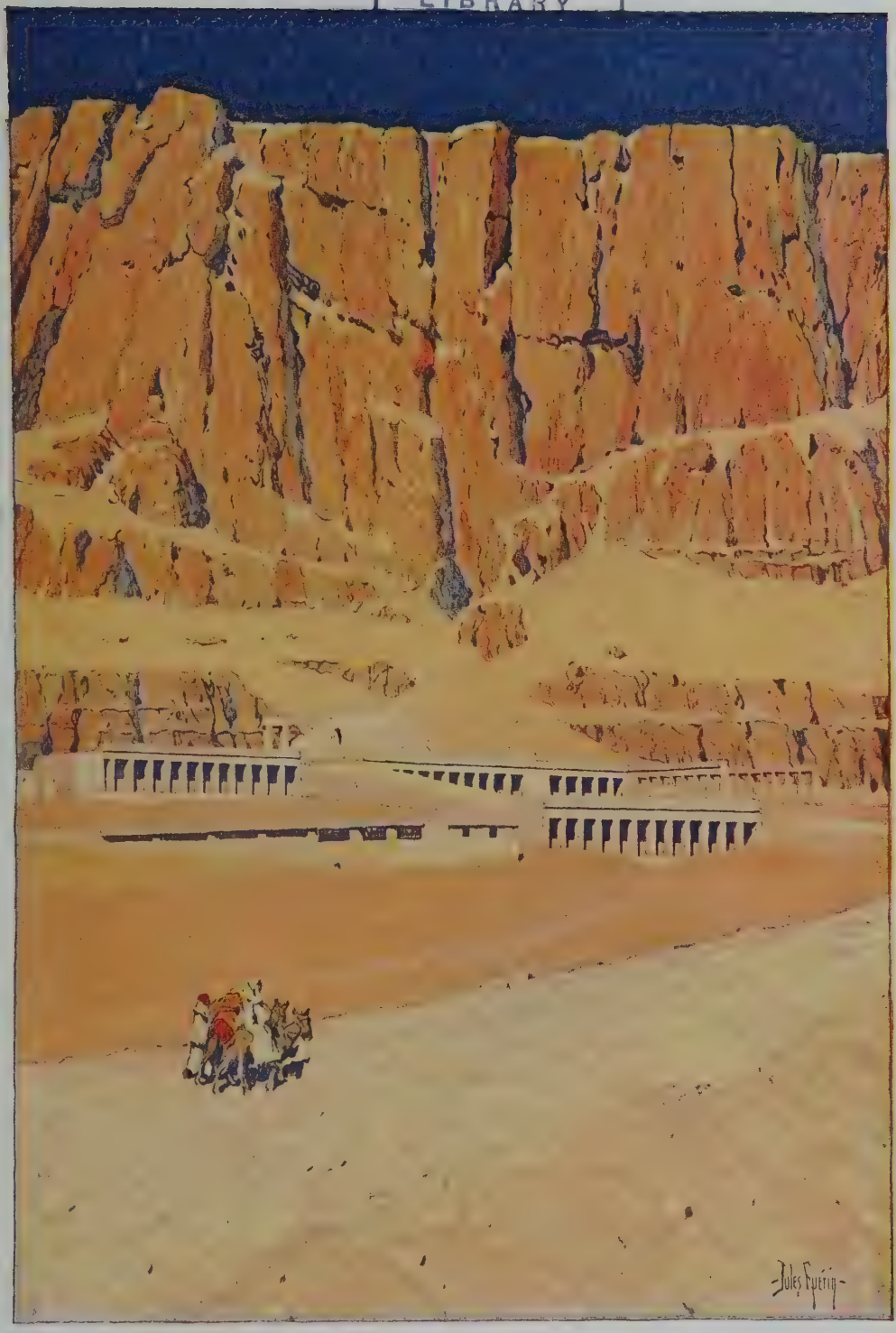
XII

DEIR-EL-BAHARI

PLACE for Queen Hatshepsu! Surely she comes to a sound of flutes, a merry noise of thin, bright music, backed by a clashing of barbaric cymbals, along the corridors of the past; this queen who is shown upon Egyptian walls dressed as a man, who is said to have worn a beard, and who sent to the land of Punt the famous expedition which covered her with glory and brought gold to the god Amun. To me most feminine she seemed when I saw her temple at Deir-el-Bahari, with its brightness and its suavity; its pretty shallowness and sunshine; its white, and blue, and yellow, and red, and green and orange; all very trim and fanciful, all very smart and delicate; full of finesse and laughter, and breathing out to me of the twentieth century the coquetry of a woman in 1500 B.C. After the terrific masculinity of Medinet-Abu, after the great freedom of the Ramesseum, and the grandeur of its colossus, the manhood of all the ages concentrated in granite, the temple at Deir-el-Bahari came upon me like a delicate woman, perfumed and arranged, clothed in a

THE TEMPLE OF QUEEN HATASU DEIR-EL-BAHARI

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY



creation of white and blue and orange, standing—ever so knowingly—against a background of orange and pink, of red and of brown-red, a smiling coquette of the mountain, a gay and sweet enchantress who knew her pretty powers and meant to exercise them.

Hatshepsu with a beard! Never will I believe it. Or if she ever seemed to wear one, I will swear it was only the tattooed ornament with which all the lovely women of the Fayum decorate their chins to-day, throwing into relief the smiling, soft lips, the delicate noses, the liquid eyes, and leading one from it step by step to the beauties it precedes.

Mr. Wallis Budge says in his book on the antiquities of Egypt: "It would be unjust to the memory of a great man and a loyal servant of Hatshepsu, if we omitted to mention the name of Senmut, the architect and overseer of works at Deir-el-Bahari." By all means let Senmut be mentioned, and then let him be utterly forgotten. A radiant queen reigns here—a queen of fantasy and splendor, and of that divine shallowness—refined frivolity literally cut into the mountain—which is the note of Deir-el-Bahari. And what a clever background! Oh, Hatshepsu knew what she was doing when she built her temple here. It was not the solemn Senmut (he wore a beard, I 'm sure) who chose that background, if I know anything of women.

Long before I visited Deir-el-Bahari I had looked

at it from afar. My eyes had been drawn to it merely from its situation right underneath the mountains. I had asked: "What do those little pillars mean? And are those little doors?" I had promised myself to go there, as one promises oneself a *bonne bouche* to finish a happy banquet. And I had realized the subtlety, essentially feminine, that had placed a temple there. And Mentu-Hotep's temple, perhaps you say, was it not there before the queen's? Then he must have possessed a subtlety purely feminine, or have been advised by one of his wives in his building operations, or by some favorite female slave. Blundering, unsubtle man would probably think that the best way to attract and to fix attention on any object was to make it much bigger than things near and around it, to set up a giant among dwarfs.

Not so Queen Hatshepsu. More artful in her generation, she set her long but little temple against the precipices of Libya. And what is the result? Simply that whenever one looks toward them one says, "What are those little pillars?" Or if one is more instructed, one thinks about Queen Hatshepsu. The precipices are as nothing. A woman's wile has blotted them out.

And yet how grand they are! I have called them tiger-colored precipices. And they suggest tawny wild beasts, fierce, bred in a land that is the prey of the sun. Every shade of orange and yellow glows and grows pale on their bosses, in their clefts. They shoot out

RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT DEIR-EL-BAHARI

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From stereograph, copyright, 1908, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

turrets of rock that blaze like flames in the day. They show great teeth, like the tiger when any one draws near. And, like the tiger, they seem perpetually informed by a spirit that is angry. Blake wrote of the tiger :

> Tiger, tiger, burning bright
> In the forests of the night.

These tiger-precipices of Libya are burning things, avid like beasts of prey. But the restored apricot-colored pillars are not afraid of their impending fury—fury of a beast baffled by a tricky little woman, almost it seems to me; and still less afraid are the white pillars, and the brilliant paintings that decorate the walls within.

As many people in the sad but lovely islands off the coast of Scotland believe in "doubles," as the old classic writers believed in man's "genius," so the ancient Egyptians believed in his "Ka," or separate entity, a sort of spiritual other self, to be propitiated and ministered to, presented with gifts, and served with energy and ardor. On this temple of Deir-el-Bahari is the scene of the birth of Hatshepsu, and there are two babies, the princess and her Ka. For this imagined Ka, when a great queen, long after, she built this temple, or chapel, that offerings might be made there on certain appointed days. Fortunate Ka of Hatshepsu to have had so cheerful a dwelling! Liveliness pervades Deir-el-Bahari. I remember, when I was on

my first visit to Egypt, lunching at Thebes with Monsieur Naville and Mr. Hogarth, and afterward going with them to watch the digging away of the masses of sand and rubbish which concealed this gracious building. I remember the songs of the half-naked workmen toiling and sweating in the sun. And I remember seeing a white temple wall come up into the light with all the painted figures surely dancing with joy upon it. And they are surely dancing still.

Here you may see, brilliant as yesterday's picture anywhere, fascinatingly decorative trees growing bravely in little pots, red people offering incense which is piled up in mounds like mountains; Ptah-Seket, Osiris receiving a royal gift of wine, the queen in the company of various divinities, and the terrible ordeal of the cows. The cows are being weighed in scales. There are three of them. One is a philosopher, and reposes with an air that says, "Even this last indignity of being weighed against my will cannot perturb my soaring spirit." But the other two, sitting up, look as apprehensive as old ladies in a rocking express, expectant of an accident. The vividness of the colors in this temple is quite wonderful. And much of its great attraction comes rather from its position, and from them, than essentially from itself. At Deir-el-Bahari, what the long shell contains—its happy murmur of life—is more fascinating than the shell. There, instead of being uplifted or overawed by form, we are rejoiced by

"THE HALF-NAKED WORKMEN TOILING AND SWEATING IN THE SUN"

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

color, by the high vivacity of arrested movement, by the story that color and movement tell. And over all there is the bright, blue, painted sky, studded, almost distractedly studded, with a plethora of the yellow stars the Egyptians made like starfish.

The restored apricot-colored columns outside look unhappily suburban when you are near them. The white columns with their architraves are more pleasant to the eyes. The niches full of bright hues, the arched chapels, the small, white steps leading upward to shallow sanctuaries, the small black foxes facing each other on little yellow pedestals—attract one like the details and amusing ornaments of a clever woman's boudoir. Through this most characteristic temple one roves in a gaily attentive mood, feeling all the time Hatshepsu's fascination.

You may see her, if you will, a little lady on the wall, with a face decidedly sensual—a long, straight nose, thick lips, an expression rather determined than agreeable. Her mother looks as Semitic as a Jew money-lender in Brick Lane, London. Her husband, Thothmes II, has a weak and poor-spirited countenance. Decidedly an accomplished performer on the second violin. The mother wears on her head a snake, no doubt a cobra-di-capello, the symbol of her sovereignty. Thothmes is clad in a loin-cloth. And a god, with a sleepy expression and a very fishlike head, appears in this group of personages to offer the key of life. Another paint-

ing of the queen shows her on her knees drinking milk from the sacred cow, with an intent and greedy figure, and an extraordinarily sensual and expressive face. That she was well guarded is surely proved by a brave display of her soldiers—red men on a white wall. Full of life and gaiety, all in a row they come, holding weapons, and, apparently, branches, and advancing with a gait of triumph that tells of "spacious days." And at their head is an officer, who looks back, much like a modern drill sergeant, to see how his men are marching.

In the southern shrine of the temple, cut in the rock as is the northern shrine, once more I found traces of the "Lady of the Under-world." For this shrine was dedicated to Hathor, though the whole temple was sacred to the Theban god Amun. Upon a column were the remains of the goddess's face, with a broad brow and long, large eyes. Some fanatic had hacked away the mouth.

The tomb of Hatshepsu was found by Mr. Theodore M. Davis, and the famous *Vache* of Deir-el-Bahari by Monsieur Naville as lately as 1905. It stands in the museum at Cairo, but forever it will be connected in the minds of men with the tiger-colored precipices and the Colonnades of Thebes. Behind the ruins of the temple of Mentu-Hotep III, in a chapel of painted rock, the Vache-Hathor was found.

It is not easy to convey by any description the im-

WORKING
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

THE VACHE HATHOR OF DENDERAH

pression this marvelous statue makes. Many of us love our dogs, our horses, some of us adore our cats; but which of us can think, without a smile, of worshiping a cow? Yet the cow was the Egyptian Aphrodite's sacred animal. Under the form of a cow she was often represented. And in the statue she is presented to us as a limestone cow. And positively this cow is to be worshiped.

She is shown in the act apparently of stepping gravely forward out of a small arched shrine, the walls of which are decorated with brilliant paintings. Her color is red and yellowish red, and is covered with blotches of very dark green, which look almost black. Only one or two are of a bluish color. Her height is moderate. I stand about five foot nine, and I found that on her pedestal the line of her back was about level with my chest. The lower part of the body, much of which is concealed by the under block of limestone, is white, tinged with yellow. The tail is red. Above the head, open and closed lotus flowers form a head-dress, with the lunar disk and two feathers. And the long lotus stalks flow down on each side of the neck toward the ground. At the back of this head-dress are a scarab and a cartouche. The goddess is advancing solemnly and gently. A wonderful calm, a matchless, serene dignity enfold her.

In the body of this cow one is able, indeed one is almost obliged, to feel the soul of a goddess. The in-

XIII

THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS

ON the way to the tombs of the kings I went to the temple of Kurna, that lonely cenotaph, with its sand-colored, massive façade, its heaps of fallen stone, its wide and ruined doorway, its thick, almost rough, columns recalling Medinet-Abu. There is not very much to see, but from there one has a fine view of other temples—of the Ramesseum, looking superb, like a grand skeleton; of Medinet-Abu, distant, very pale gold in the morning sunlight; of little Deir-al-Medinet, the pretty child of the Ptolemies, with the heads of the seven Hathors. And from Kurna the Colossi are exceptionally grand and exceptionally personal, so personal that one imagines one sees the expressions of the faces that they no longer possess.

Even if you do not go into the tombs,—but you will go,—you must ride to the tombs of the kings; and you must, if you care for the finesse of impressions, ride on a blazing day and toward the hour of noon. Then the ravine is itself, like the great act that demonstrates a temperament. It is the narrow home of fire,

XIII

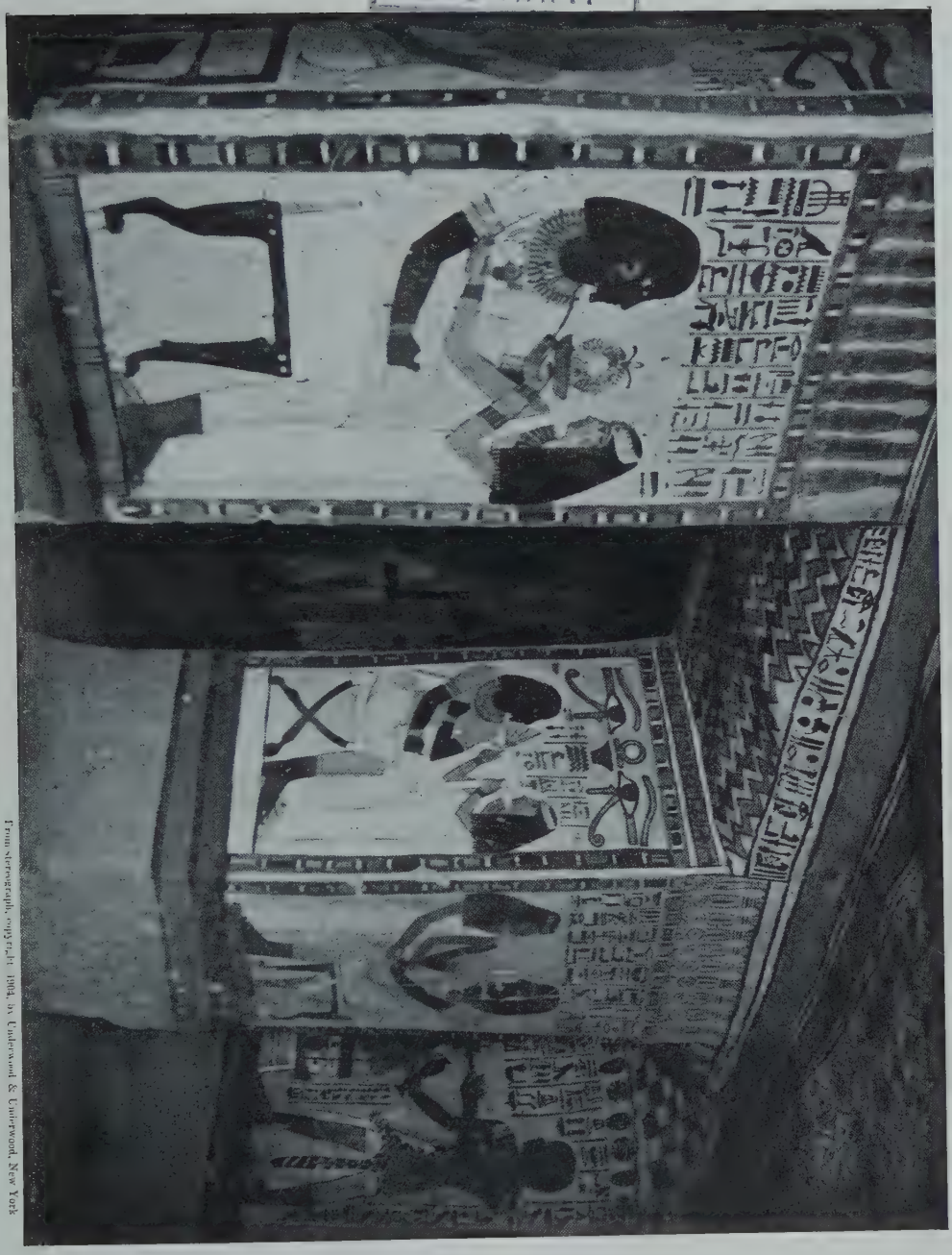
THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS

ON the way to the tombs of the kings I went to the temple of Kurna, that lonely cenotaph, with its sand-colored, massive façade, its heaps of fallen stone, its wide and ruined doorway, its thick, almost rough, columns recalling Medinet-Abu. There is not very much to see, but from there one has a fine view of other temples—of the Ramesseum, looking superb, like a grand skeleton; of Medinet-Abu, distant, very pale gold in the morning sunlight; of little Deir-al-Medinet, the pretty child of the Ptolemies, with the heads of the seven Hathors. And from Kurna the Colossi are exceptionally grand and exceptionally personal, so personal that one imagines one sees the expressions of the faces that they no longer possess.

Even if you do not go into the tombs,—but you will go,—you must ride to the tombs of the kings; and you must, if you care for the finesse of impressions, ride on a blazing day and toward the hour of noon. Then the ravine is itself, like the great act that demonstrates a temperament. It is the narrow home of fire,

PAINTED TOMB CHAMBER OF PRINCE SEN-NOFER, THEBES

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.



From stereograph, copyright 1904, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

hemmed in by brilliant colors, nearly all—perhaps quite all — of which could be found in a glowing furnace. Every shade of yellow is there, — lemon yellow, sulphur yellow, the yellow of amber, the yellow of orange with its tendency toward red, the yellow of gold, sand color, sun color. Cannot all these yellows be found in a fire? And there are reds—pink of the carnation, pink of the coral, red of the little rose that grows in certain places of sands, red of the bright flame's heart. And all these colors are mingled in complete sterility. And all are fused into a fierce brotherhood by the sun. And like a flood, they seem flowing to the red and the yellow mountains, like a flood that is flowing to its sea. You are taken by them toward the mountains, on and on, till the world is closing in, and you know the way must come to an end. And it comes to an end—in a tomb.

You go to a door in the rock, and a guardian lets you in, and wants to follow you in. Prevent him if you can. Pay him. Go in alone. For this is the tomb of Amenhotep II.; and he himself is here, far down, at rest under the mountain, this king who lived and reigned more than fourteen hundred years before the birth of Christ. The ravine-valley leads to him, and you should go to him alone. He lies in the heart of the living rock, in the dull heat of the earth's bowels, which is like no other heat. You descend by stairs and corridors, you pass over a well by a bridge, you

pass through a naked chamber; and the king is not there. And you go on down another staircase, and along another corridor, and you come into a pillared chamber, with paintings on its walls, and on its pillars, paintings of the king in the presence of the gods of the under-world, under stars in a soft blue sky. And below you, shut in on the farther side by the solid mountain in whose breast you have all this time been walking, there is a crypt. And you turn away from the bright paintings, and down there you see the king.

Many years ago in London I went to the private view of the Royal Academy at Burlington House. I went in the afternoon when the galleries were crowded with politicians and artists, with dealers, gossips, quid-nuncs, and *flâneurs;* with authors, fashionable lawyers, and doctors; with men and women of the world; with young dandies and actresses *en vogue.* A roar of voices went up to the roof. Every one was talking, smiling, laughing, commenting, and criticizing. It was a little picture of the very worldly world that loves the things of to-day and the chime of the passing hours. And suddenly some people near me were silent, and some turned their heads to stare with a strangely fixed attention. And I saw coming toward me an emaciated figure, rather bent, much drawn together, walking slowly on legs like sticks. It was clad in black, with a gleam of color. Above it was a face so intensely thin that it was like the face of death. And in this face shone

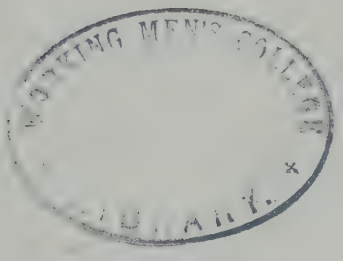
TEMPLE OF ESNEH

WORKING MEN'S

From stereograph, copyright, 1908, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

two eyes that seemed full of—the other world. And, like a breath from the other world passing, this man went by me and was hidden from me by the throng. It was Cardinal Manning in the last days of his life.

The face of this king is like his, but it has an even deeper pathos as it looks upward to the rock. And the king's silence bids you be silent, and his immobility bids you be still. And his sad, and unutterable resignation sifts awe, as by the desert wind the sand is sifted into the temples, into the temple of your heart. And you feel the touch of time, but the touch of eternity, too. And as, in that rock-hewn sanctuary, you whisper "Pax vobiscum," you say it for all the world.



XIV

EDFU

PRAYER pervades the East. Far off across the sands, when one is traveling in the desert, one sees thin minarets rising toward the sky. A desert city is there. It signals its presence by this mute appeal to Allah. And where there are no minarets,—in the great wastes of the dunes, in the eternal silence, the lifelessness that is not broken even by any lonely, wandering bird,—the camels are stopped at the appointed hours, the poor, and often ragged, robes are laid down, the brown pilgrims prostrate themselves in prayer. And the rich man spreads his carpet, and prays. And the half-naked nomad spreads nothing; but he prays, too. The East is full of lust, and full of money-getting, and full of bartering, and full of violence; but it is full of worship—of worship that disdains concealment, that recks not of ridicule or comment, that believes too utterly to care if others disbelieve. There are in the East many men who do not pray. They do not laugh at the man who does, like the unpraying Christian. There is nothing ludicrous

PRAYER IN THE DESERT

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE

to them in prayer. In Egypt your Nubian sailor prays in the stern of your dahabiyeh; and your Egyptian boatman prays by the rudder of your boat; and your black donkey-boy prays behind a red rock in the sand; and your camel-man prays when you are resting in the noontide, watching the far-off, quivering mirage, lost in some wayward dream.

And must you not pray, too, when you enter certain temples where once strange gods were worshiped in whom no man now believes?

There is one temple on the Nile which seems to embrace in its arms all the worship of the past; to be full of prayers and solemn praises; to be the holder, the noble keeper, of the sacred longings, of the unearthly desires and aspirations, of the dead. It is the temple of Edfu. From all the other temples it stands apart. It is the temple of the inward flame, of the secret soul of man; of that mystery within us that is exquisitely sensitive, and exquisitely alive; that has longings it cannot tell, and sorrows it dare not whisper, and loves it can only love.

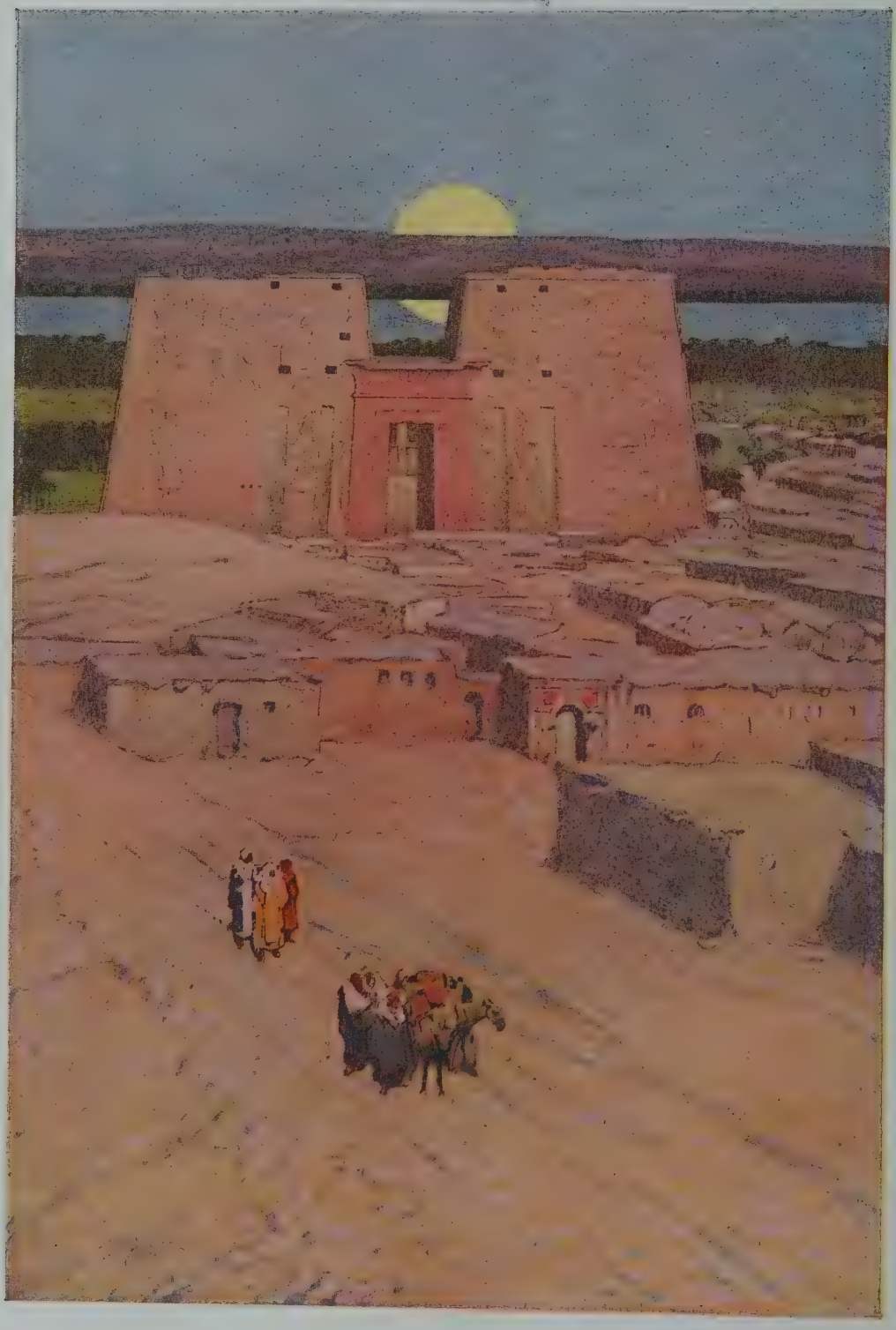
To Horus it was dedicated,—hawk-headed Horus,—the son of Isis and Osiris, who was crowned with many crowns, who was the young Apollo of the old Egyptian world. But though I know this, I am never able to associate Edfu with Horus, that child wearing the side-lock,—when he is not hawk-headed in his solar aspect,—that boy with his finger in his mouth,

that youth who fought against Set, murderer of his father.

Edfu, in its solemn beauty, in its perfection of form, seems to me to pass into a region altogether beyond identification with the worship of any special deity, with particular attributes, perhaps with particular limitations; one who can be graven upon walls, and upon architraves and pillars painted in brilliant colors; one who can personally pursue a criminal, like some policeman in the street; even one who can rise upon the world in the visible glory of the sun. To me, Edfu must always represent the world-worship of "the Hidden One"; not Amun, god of the dead, fused with Ra, with Amsu, or with Khnum: but that other "Hidden One," who is God of the happy hunting-ground of savages, with whom the Buddhist strives to merge his strange serenity of soul; who is adored in the "Holy Places" by the Moslem, and lifted mystically above the heads of kneeling Catholics in cathedrals dim with incense, and merrily praised with the banjo and the trumpet in the streets of black English cities; who is asked for children by longing women, and for new dolls by lisping babes; whom the atheist denies in the day, and fears in the darkness of night; who is on the lips alike of priest and blasphemer, and in the soul of all human life.

Edfu is the temple of "the Hidden One." It is not pagan; it is not Christian: it is a place in which to worship according to the dictates of your heart.

WORKING MEN'S
COLL
LIBRARY.



THE TEMPLE OF EDFU

EDFU

Edfu stands alone, not near any other temple, on the bank of the Nile between Luxor and Assuan. It is not very far from El-Kab, once the capital of Upper Egypt, and it is about two thousand years old. The building of it took over one hundred and eighty years, and it is the most perfectly preserved temple to-day of all the antique world. It is huge and it is splendid. It has towers one hundred and twelve feet high, a propylon two hundred and fifty-two feet broad, and walls four hundred and fifty feet long. Begun in the reign of Ptolemy III, it was completed only fifty-seven years before the birth of Christ.

You know these facts about it, and you forget them, or at least you do not think of them. What does all that matter when you are alone in Edfu? Let the antiquarian go with his anxious nose almost touching the stone; let the Egyptologist peer through his glasses at hieroglyphs and puzzle out the meaning of cartouches: but let us wander at ease, and worship, and regard the exquisite form, and drink in the mystical spirit, of this very wonderful temple.

Do you care about form? Here you will find it in absolute perfection. Edfu is the consecration of form. In proportion it is supreme above all other Egyptian temples. Its beauty of form is like a music. Its design affects one like the chiseled loveliness of a perfect sonnet. While the world lasts, no architect can arise to create a building more satisfying, more calm with the

calm of faultlessness, more serene with a just serenity. Or so it seems to me. I think of the most lovely buildings I know in Europe—of the Alhambra at Granada, of the Cappella Palatina in the palace at Palermo. And Edfu I place with them—Edfu utterly different from them, more different, perhaps, even than they are from each other, but akin to them, as all great beauty is mysteriously akin. I have spent morning after morning in the Alhambra, and many and many an hour in the Cappella Palatina; and never have I been weary of either, or longed to go away. And this same sweet desire to stay came over me in Edfu. The *Loulia* was tied up by the high bank of the Nile. The sailors were glad to rest. There was no steamer sounding its hideous siren to call me to its crowded deck. So I yielded to my desire, and for long I stayed in Edfu. And when at last I left it I said to myself, "This is a supreme thing," and I knew that within me had suddenly developed the curious passion for buildings that some people never feel, and that others feel ever growing and growing.

Yes, Edfu is supreme. No alteration could improve it. Any change made in it, however slight, could only be harmful to it. Pure and perfect is its design—broad propylon, great open courtyard with pillared galleries, halls, chambers, sanctuary. Its dignity and its sobriety are matchless. I know they must be, because they touched me so strangely, with a kind of reticent en-

PYLON, TEMPLE OF EDFU

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

chantment, and I am not by nature enamoured of sobriety, of reticence and calm, but am inclined to delight in almost violent force, in brilliance, and, especially, in combinations of color. In the Alhambra one finds both force and fairylike lightness, delicious proportions, delicate fantasy, a spell as of subtle magicians; in the Cappella Palatina a jeweled splendor, combined with a small perfection of form which simply captivates the whole spirit and leads it to adoration. In Edfu you are face to face with hugeness and with grandeur; but soon you are scarcely aware of either—in the sense, at least, that connects these qualities with a certain overwhelming, almost striking down, of the spirit and the faculties. What you are aware of is your own immense and beautiful calm of utter satisfaction—a calm which has quietly inundated you, like a waveless tide of the sea. How rare it is to feel this absolute satisfaction, this praising serenity! The critical spirit goes, like a bird from an opened window. The excited, laudatory, voluble spirit goes. And this splendid calm is left. If you stay here, you, as this temple has been, will be molded into a beautiful sobriety. From the top of the pylon you have received this still and glorious impression from the matchless design of the whole building, which you see best from there. When you descend the shallow staircase, when you stand in the great court, when you go into the shadowy halls, then it is that the utter satisfaction within you deepens.

Then it is that you feel the need to worship in this place created for worship.

The ancient Egyptians made most of their temples in conformity with a single type. The sanctuary was the heart, the core, of each temple — the sanctuary surrounded by the chambers in which were laid up the precious objects connected with ceremonies and sacrifices. Leading to this core of the temple, which was sometimes called "the divine house," were various halls the roofs of which were supported by columns — those hypostyle halls which one sees perpetually in Egypt. Before the first of these halls was a courtyard surrounded by a colonnade. In the courtyard the priests of the temple assembled. The people were allowed to enter the colonnade. A gateway with towers gave entrance to the courtyard. If one visits many of the Egyptian temples, one soon becomes aware of the subtlety, combined with a sort of high simplicity, and sense of mystery and poetry, of these builders of the past. As a great writer leads one on, with a concealed but beautiful art, from the first words of his story to the last — the last words to which all the other words are ministering servants; as the great musician — Wagner in his "Meistersinger," for instance, — leads one from the first notes of his score to those final notes which magnificently reveal to the listeners the real meaning of those first notes, and of all the notes which followed them: so the Egyptian builders lead the spirit gently,

mysteriously forward from the gateway between the towers to the distant house divine. When one enters the outer court, one feels the far-off sanctuary. Almost unconsciously one is aware that for that sanctuary all the rest of the temple was created; that to that sanctuary everything tends. And in spirit one is drawn softly onward to that very holy place. Slowly, perhaps, the body moves from courtyard to hypostyle hall, and from one hall to another. Hieroglyphs are examined, cartouches puzzled out, paintings of processions, or bas-reliefs of pastimes and of sacrifices, looked at with care and interest; but all the time one has the sense of waiting, of a want unsatisfied. And only when one at last reaches the sanctuary is one perfectly at rest. For then the spirit feels: "This is the meaning of it all."

One of the means which the Egyptian architects used to create this sense of approach is very simple, but perfectly effective. It consists only in making each hall on a very slightly higher level than the one preceding it, and the sanctuary, which is narrow and mysteriously dark, on the highest level of all. Each time one takes an upward step, or walks up a little incline of stone, the body seems to convey to the soul a deeper message of reverence and awe. In no other temple is this sense of approach to the heart of a thing so acute as it is when one walks in Edfu. In no other temple, when the sanctuary is reached, has one such a strong consciousness of being indeed within a sacred heart.

The color of Edfu is a pale and delicate brown, warm in the strong sunshine, but seldom glowing. Its first doorway is extraordinarily high, and is narrow, but very deep, with a roof showing traces of that delicious, clear blue-green which is like a thin cry of joy rising up in the solemn temples of Egypt. A small sphinx keeps watch on the right, just where the guardian stands; this guardian, the gift of the past, squat, even fat, with a very perfect face of a determined and handsome man. In the court, upon a pedestal, stands a big bird, and near it is another bird, or rather half of a bird, leaning forward, and much defaced. And in this great court-yard there are swarms of living birds twittering in the sunshine. Through the doorway between the towers one sees a glimpse of a native village with the cupolas of a mosque.

I stood and looked at the cupolas for a moment. Then I turned, and forgot for a time the life of the world without—that men, perhaps, were praying beneath those cupolas, or praising the Moslem's God. For when I turned, I felt, as I have said, as if all the worship of the world must be concentrated here. Standing far down the open court, in the full sunshine, I could see into the first hypostyle hall, but beyond only a darkness—a darkness which led me on, in which the further chambers of the house divine were hidden. As I went on slowly, the perfection of the plan of the dead architects was gradually revealed to

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

THE TEMPLE OF EDFU FROM THE TOP OF THE PYLON

me, when the darkness gave up its secrets; when I saw not clearly, but dimly, the long way between the columns, the noble columns themselves, the gradual, slight upward slope,—graduated by genius; there is no other word,—which led to the sanctuary, seen at last as a little darkness, in which all the mystery of worship, and of the silent desires of men, was surely concentrated, and kept by the stone forever. Even the succession of the darknesses, like shadows growing deeper and deeper, seemed planned by some great artist in the management of light, and so of shadow effects. The perfection of form is in Edfu, impossible to describe, impossible not to feel. The tremendous effect it has—an effect upon the soul—is created by a combination of shapes, of proportions, of different levels, of different heights, by consummate graduation. And these shapes, proportions, different levels, and heights, are seen in dimness. Not that jeweled dimness one loves in Gothic cathedrals, but the heavy dimness of windowless, mighty chambers lighted only by a rebuked daylight ever trying to steal in. One is captured by no ornament, seduced by no lovely colors. Better than any ornament, greater than any radiant glory of color, is this massive austerity. It is like the ultimate in an art. Everything has been tried, every strangeness, *bizarrerie*, absurdity, every wild scheme of hues, every preposterous subject—to take an extreme instance, a camel, wearing a top-hat, and lighted up by fireworks,

which I saw recently in a picture-gallery of Munich. And at the end a genius paints a portrait of a wrinkled old woman's face, and the world regards and worships. Or all discords have been flung together pell-mell, resolution of them has been deferred perpetually, perhaps even denied altogether, chord of B major has been struck with C major, works have closed upon the leading note or the dominant seventh, symphonies have been composed to be played in the dark, or to be accompanied by a magic-lantern's efforts, operas been produced which are merely carnage and a row,—and at the end a genius writes a little song, and the world gives the tribute of its breathless silence and its tears. And it knows that though other things may be done, better things can never be done. For no perfection can exceed any other perfection.

And so in Edfu I feel that this untinted austerity is perfect; that whatever may be done in architecture during future ages of the world, Edfu, while it lasts, will remain a thing supreme—supreme in form and, because of this supremacy, supreme in the spell which it casts upon the soul.

The sanctuary is just a small, beautifully proportioned, inmost chamber, with a black roof, containing a sort of altar of granite, and a great polished granite shrine which no doubt once contained the god Horus. I am glad he is not there now. How far more impressive it is to stand in an empty sanctuary, in the

THE COURT, TEMPLE OF EDFU

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

house divine of "the Hidden One," whom the nations of the earth worship, whether they spread their robes on the sand and turn their faces to Mecca, or beat the tambourine and sing "glory-hymns" of salvation, or flagellate themselves in the night before the patron saint of the Passionists, or only gaze at the snow-white plume that floats from the snows of Etna under the rose of dawn, and feel the soul behind Nature. Among the temples of Egypt, Edfu is the house divine of "the Hidden One," the perfect temple of worship.

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

XV

KOM OMBOS

SOME people talk of the "sameness" of the Nile; and there is a lovely sameness of golden light, of delicious air, of people, and of scenery. For Egypt is, after all, mainly a great river with strips on each side of cultivated land, flat, green, not very varied. River, green plains, yellow plains, pink, brown, steel-gray, or pale-yellow mountains, wail of shadoof, wail of sakieh. Yes, I suppose there is a sameness, a sort of golden monotony, in this land pervaded with light and pervaded with sound. Always there is light around you, and you are bathing in it, and nearly always, if you are living, as I was, on the water, there is a multitude of mingling sounds floating, floating to your ears. As there are two lines of green land, two lines of mountains, following the course of the Nile; so are there two lines of voices that cease their calling and their singing only as you draw near to Nubia. For then, with the green land, they fade away, these miles upon miles of calling and singing brown men; and amber and ruddy sands creep downward to the Nile. And the air seems subtly changing, and the light perhaps

HYPOSTYLE HALL, KÔM OMBOS

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From a photograph by James S. Lee

growing a little harder. And you are aware of other regions unlike those you are leaving, more African, more savage, less suave, less like a dreaming. And especially the silence makes a great impression on you. But before you enter this silence, between the amber and ruddy walls that will lead you on to Nubia, and to the land of the crocodile, you have a visit to pay. For here, high up on a terrace, looking over a great bend of the river, is Kom Ombos. And Kom Ombos is the temple of the crocodile god.

Sebek was one of the oldest and one of the most evil of the Egyptian gods. In the Fayum he was worshiped, as well as at Kom Ombos, and there, in the holy lake of his temple, were numbers of holy crocodiles, which Strabo tells us were decorated with jewels like pretty women. He did not get on with the other gods, and was sometimes confused with Set, who personified natural darkness, and who also was worshiped by the people about Kom Ombos.

I have spoken of the golden sameness of the Nile, but this sameness is broken by the variety of the temples. Here you have a striking instance of this variety. Edfu, only forty miles from Kom Ombos, the next temple which you visit, is the most perfect temple in Egypt. Kom Ombos one of the most imperfect. Edfu is a divine house of "the Hidden One," full of a sacred atmosphere. Kom Ombos is the house of crocodiles. In ancient days the inhabitants of Edfu

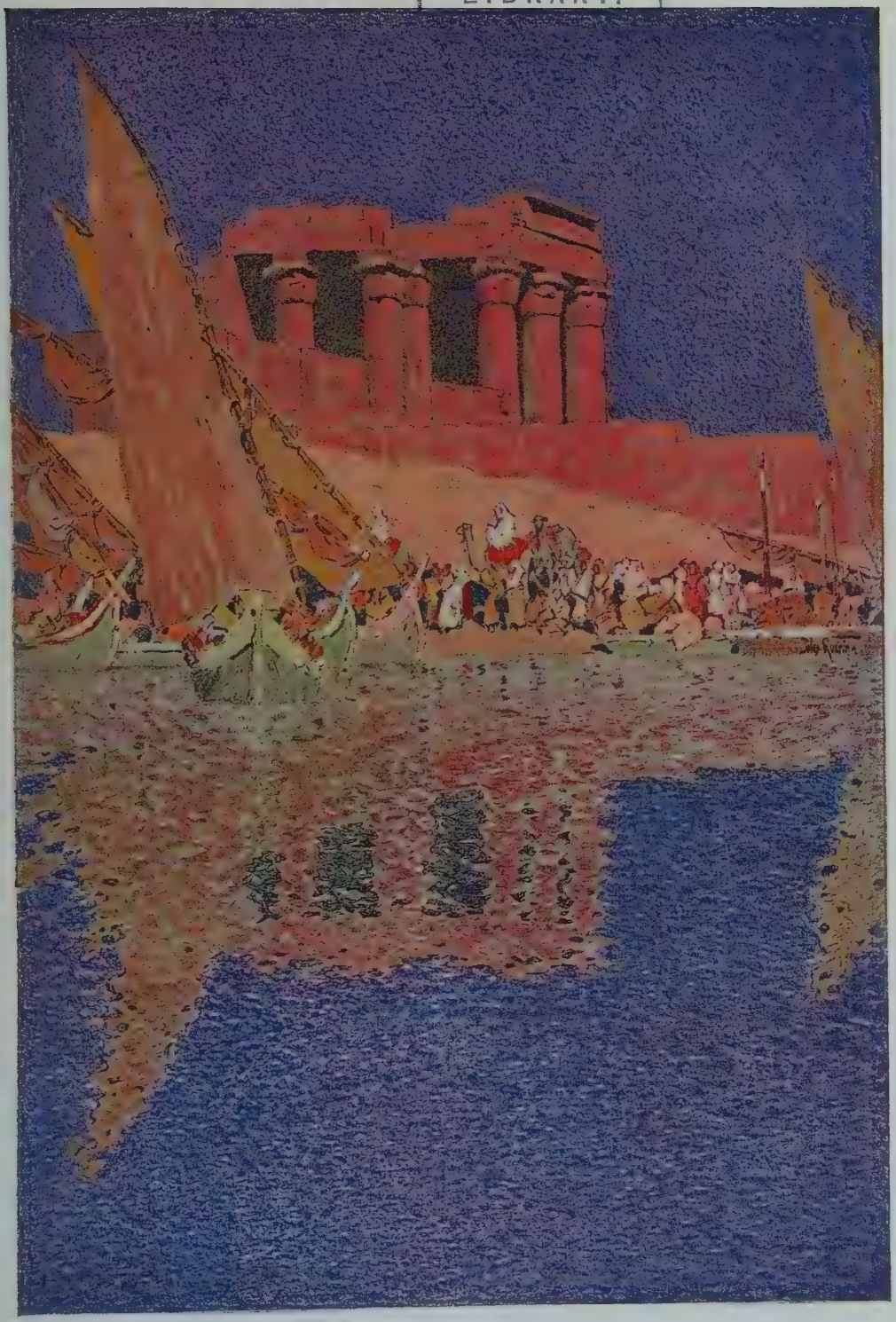
abhorred, above everything, crocodiles and their worshipers. And here at Kom Ombos the crocodile was adored. You are in a different atmosphere.

As soon as you land, you are greeted with crocodiles, though fortunately not by them. A heap of their black mummies is shown to you reposing in a sort of tomb or shrine open at one end to the air. By these mummies the new note is loudly struck. The crocodiles have carried you in an instant from that which is pervadingly general to that which is narrowly particular; from the purely noble, which seems to belong to all time, to the entirely barbaric, which belongs only to times outworn. It is difficult to feel as if one had anything in common with men who seriously worshiped crocodiles, had priests to feed them, and decorated their scaly necks with jewels.

Yet the crocodile god had a noble temple at Kom Ombos, a temple which dates from the times of the Ptolemies, though there was a temple in earlier days which has now disappeared. Its situation is splendid. It stands high above the Nile, and close to the river, on a terrace which has recently been constructed to save it from the encroachments of the water. And it looks down upon a view which is exquisite in the clear light of early morning. On the right, and far off, is a delicious pink bareness of distant flats and hills. Opposite there is a flood of verdure and of trees going to mountains, a spit of sand where is an inlet of the river,

THE TEMPLE OF KÔM OMBOS

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.



with a crowd of native boats, perhaps waiting for a wind. On the left is the big bend of the Nile, singularly beautiful, almost voluptuous in form, and girdled with a radiant green of crops, with palm-trees, and again the distant hills. Sebek was well advised to have his temples here and in the glorious Fayum, that land flowing with milk and honey, where the air is full of the voices of the flocks and herds, and alive with the wild pigeons; where the sweet sugar-cane towers up in fairy forests, the beloved home of the jackal; where the green corn waves to the horizon, and the runlets of water make a maze of silver threads carrying life and its happy murmur through all the vast oasis.

At the guardian's gate by which you go in there sits not a watch dog, nor yet a crocodile, but a watch cat, small, but very determined, and very attentive to its duties, and neatly carved in stone. You try to look like a crocodile-worshiper. It is deceived, and lets you pass. And you are alone with the growing morning and Kom Ombos.

I was never taken, caught up into an atmosphere, in Kom Ombos. I examined it with interest, but I did not feel a spell. Its grandeur is great, but it did not affect me as did the grandeur of Karnak. Its nobility cannot be questioned, but I did not stilly rejoice in it, as in the nobility of Luxor, or the free splendor of the Ramesseum.

The oldest thing at Kom Ombos is a gateway of

sandstone placed there by Thothmes III as a tribute to Sebek. The great temple is of a warm-brown color, a very rich and particularly beautiful brown, that soothes and almost comforts the eyes that have been for many days boldly assaulted by the sun. Upon the terrace platform above the river you face a low and ruined wall, on which there are some lively reliefs, beyond which is a large, open court containing a quantity of stunted, once big columns standing on big bases. Immediately before you the temple towers up, very gigantic, very majestic, with a stone pavement, walls on which still remain some traces of paintings, and really grand columns, enormous in size and in good formation. There are fine architraves, and some bits of roofing, but the greater part is open to the air. Through a doorway is a second hall containing columns much less noble, and beyond this one walks in ruin, among crumbled or partly destroyed chambers, broken statues, become mere slabs of granite and fallen blocks of stone. At the end is a wall, with a pavement bordering it, and a row of chambers that look like monkish cells, closed by small doors. At Kom Ombos there are two sanctuaries, one dedicated to Sebek, the other to Heruur, or Haroëris, a form of Horus in Egyptian called "the Elder," which was worshiped with Sebek here by the admirers of crocodiles. Each of them contains a pedestal of granite upon which once rested a sacred bark bearing an image of the deity.

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

TEMPLE OF KOM OMBOS. SCREEN WALL OF HYPOSTYLE HALL

There are some fine reliefs scattered through these mighty ruins, showing Sebek with the head of a crocodile, Heru-ur with the head of a hawk so characteristic of Hɒrus, and one strange animal which has no fewer than four heads, apparently meant for the heads of lions. One relief which I specially noticed for its life, its charming vivacity, and its almost amusing fidelity to details unchanged to-day, depicts a number of ducks in full flight near a mass of lotus flowers. I remembered it one day in the Fayum, so intimately associated with Sebek, when I rode twenty miles out from camp on a dromedary to the end of the great lake of Kurun, where the sand wastes of the Libyan desert stretch to the pale and waveless waters which, that day, looked curiously desolate and even sinister under a low, gray sky. Beyond the wiry tamarisk bushes, which grow far out from the shore, thousands upon thousands of wild duck were floating as far as the eyes could see. We took a strange native boat, manned by two half-naked fishermen, and were rowed with big, broad-bladed oars out upon the silent flood that the silent desert surrounded. But the duck were too wary ever to let us get within range of them. As we drew gently near, they rose in black throngs, and skimmed low into the distance of the wintry landscape, trailing their legs behind them, like the duck on the wall of Kom Ombos. There was no duck for dinner in camp that night, and the cook was inconsolable. But I had

seen a relief come to life, and surmounted my disappointment.

Kom Ombos and Edfu, the two houses of the lovers and haters of crocodiles, or at least of the lovers and the haters of their worship, I shall always think of them together, because I drifted on the *Loulia* from one to the other, and saw no interesting temple between them, and because their personalities are as opposed as were, centuries ago, the tenets of those who adored within them. The Egyptians of old were devoted to the hunting of crocodiles, which once abounded in the reaches of the Nile between Assuan and Luxor, and also much lower down. But I believe that no reliefs, or paintings, of this sport are to be found upon the walls of the temples and the tombs. The fear of Sebek, perhaps, prevailed even over the dwellers about the temple of Edfu. Yet how could fear of any crocodile god infect the souls of those who were privileged to worship in such a temple, or even reverently to stand under the colonnade within the court? As well, perhaps, one might ask how men could be inspired to raise such a perfect building to a deity with the face of a hawk? But Horus was not the god of crocodiles, but a god of the sun. And his power to inspire men must have been vast; for the greatest conception in stone in Egypt, and, I suppose, in the whole world, the Sphinx, as De Rougé proved by an inscription at Edfu, was a representation of Horus transformed to

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

THE ISLAND OF ELEPHANTINE, FROM ASSOUAN

WORKI G MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

THE ISLAND OF ELEPHANTINE, FROM ASSOUAN

conquer Typhon. The Sphinx and Edfu! For such marvels we ought to bless the hawk-headed god. And if we forget the hawk, which one meets so perpetually upon the walls of tombs and temples, and identify Horus rather with the Greek Apollo, the yellow-haired god of the sun, driving "westerly all day in his flaming chariot," and shooting his golden arrows at the happy world beneath, we can be at peace with those dead Egyptians. For every pilgrim who goes to Edfu to-day is surely a worshiper of the solar aspect of Horus. As long as the world lasts there will be sun-worshipers. Every brown man upon the Nile is one, and every good American who crosses the ocean and comes at last into the somber wonder of Edfu, and I was one upon the deck of the *Loulia*.

And we all worship as yet in the dark, as in the exquisite dark, like faith, of the Holy of Holies of Horus.

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

XVI

PHILÆ

AS I drew slowly nearer and nearer to the home of "the great Enchantress," or, as Isis was also called in bygone days, "the Lady of Philæ," the land began to change in character, to be full of a new and barbaric meaning. In recent years I have paid many visits to northern Africa, but only to Tunisia and Algeria, countries that are wilder-looking, and much wilder-seeming, than Egypt. Now, as I approached Assuan, I seemed at last to be also approaching the real, the intense Africa that I had known in the Sahara, the enigmatic siren, savage and strange and wonderful, whom the typical Ouled Näil, crowned with gold, and tufted with ostrich plumes, painted with kohl, tattooed, and perfumed, hung with golden coins and amulets, and framed in plaits of coarse, false hair, represents indifferently to the eyes of the traveling stranger. For at last I saw the sands that I love creeping down to the banks of the Nile. And they brought with them that wonderful air which belongs only to them—the air that dwells among the dunes in the solitary places, that is like the cool touch of Liberty upon the face of a

THE ISLE OF PHILÆ BEFORE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DAM

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

man, that makes the brown child of the nomad as lithe, tireless, and fierce-spirited as a young panther, and sets flames in the eyes of the Arab horse, and gives speed of the wind to the Sloughi. The true lover of the desert can never rid his soul of its passion for the sands, and now my heart leaped as I stole into their pure embraces, as I saw to right and left amber curves and sheeny recesses, shining ridges and bloomy clefts. The clean delicacy of those sands that, in long and glowing hills, stretched out from Nubia to meet me, who could ever describe them? Who could ever describe their soft and enticing shapes, their exquisite gradations of color, the little shadows in their hollows, the fiery beauty of their crests, the patterns the cool winds make upon them? It is an enchanted *royaume* of the sands through which one approaches Isis.

Isis and engineers! We English people have effected that curious introduction, and we greatly pride ourselves upon it. We have presented Sir William Garstin, and Mr. John Blue, and Mr. Fitz Maurice, and other clever, hard-working men to the fabled Lady of Philæ, and they have given her a gift: a dam two thousand yards in length, upon which tourists go smiling on trolleys. Isis has her expensive tribute,—it cost about a million and a half pounds,—and no doubt she ought to be gratified.

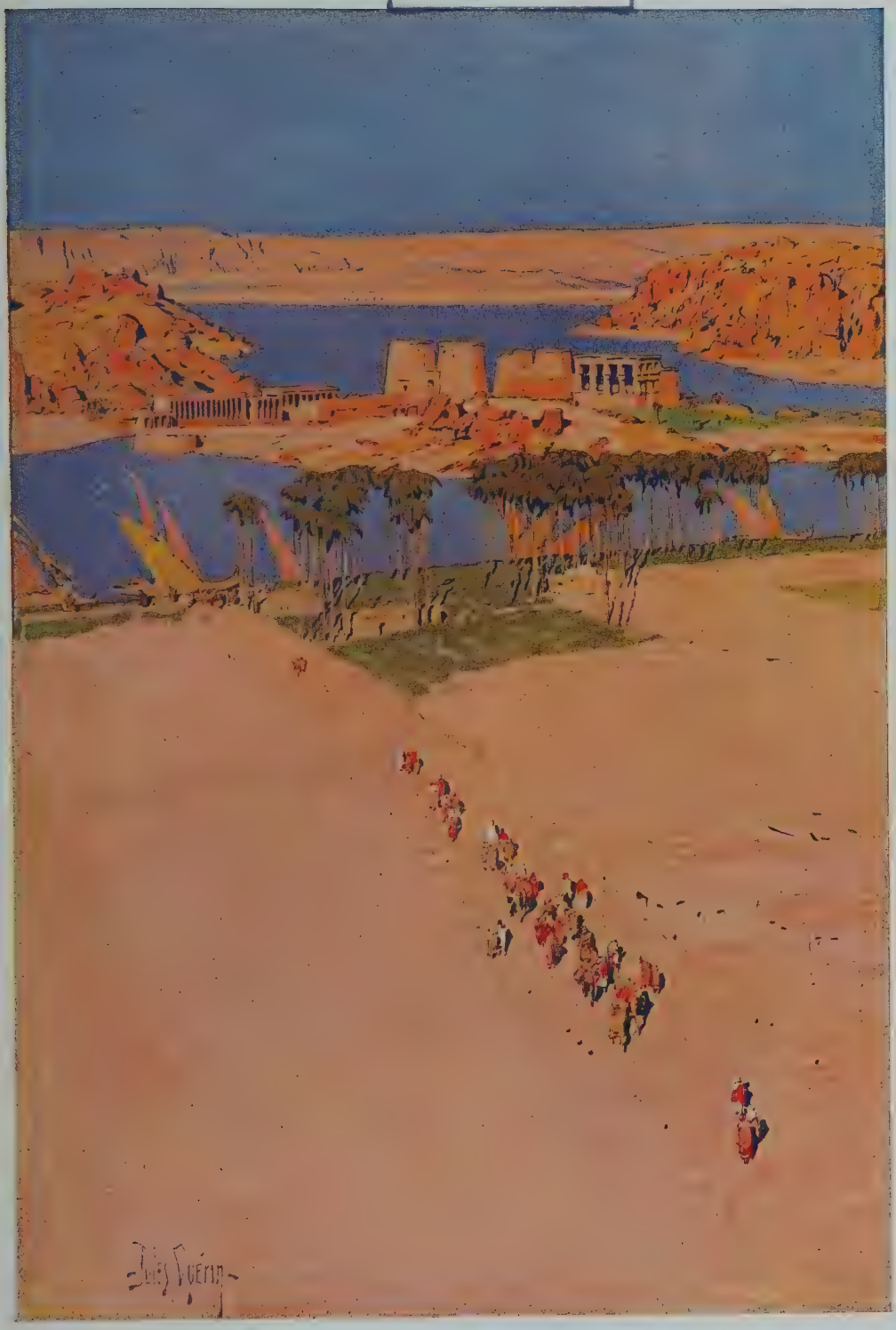
Yet I think Isis mourns on altered Philæ, as she mourns with her sister, Nepthys, at the heads of so

many mummies of Osirians upon the walls of Egyptian tombs. And though the fellaheen very rightly rejoice, there are some unpractical sentimentalists who form a company about her, and make their plaint with hers—their plaint for the peace that is gone, for the lost calm, the departed poetry, that once hung, like a delicious, like an inimitable, atmosphere, about the palms of the "Holy Island."

I confess that I dreaded to revisit Philæ. I had sweet memories of the island that had been with me for many years—memories of still mornings under the palm-trees, watching the gliding waters of the river, or gazing across them to the long sweep of the empty sands; memories of drowsy, golden noons, when the bright world seemed softly sleeping, and the almost daffodil-colored temple dreamed under the quivering canopy of blue; memories of evenings when a benediction from the lifted hands of Romance surely fell upon the temple and the island and the river; memories of moonlit nights, when the spirits of the old gods to whom the temples were reared surely held converse with the spirits of the desert, with Mirage and her pale and evading sisters of the great spaces, under the brilliant stars. I was afraid, because I could not believe the asseverations of certain practical persons, full of the hard and almost angry desire of "Progress," that no harm had been done by the creation of the reservoir, but that, on the contrary, it had benefited the temple.

THE SACRED ISLE OF PHILÆ

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.



The action of the water upon the stone, they said with vehement voices, instead of loosening it and causing it to crumble untimely away, had tended to harden and consolidate it. Here I should like to lie, but I resist the temptation. Monsieur Naville has stated that possibly the English engineers have helped to prolong the lives of the buildings of Philæ, and Monsieur Maspero has declared that "the state of the temple of Philæ becomes continually more satisfactory." So be it! Longevity has been, by a happy chance, secured. But what of beauty? What of the beauty of the past, and what of the schemes for the future? Is Philæ even to be left as it is, or are the waters of the Nile to be artificially raised still higher, until Philæ ceases to be? Soon, no doubt, an answer will be given.

Meanwhile, instead of the little island that I knew, and thought a little paradise breathing out enchantment in the midst of titanic sterility, I found a something diseased. Philæ now, when out of the water, as it was all the time when I was last in Egypt, looks like a thing stricken with some creeping malady—one of those maladies which begin in the lower members of a body, and work their way gradually but inexorably upward to the trunk, until they attain the heart.

I came to it by the desert, and descended to Shellal —Shellal with its railway-station, its workmen's buildings, its tents, its dozens of screens to protect the hewers of stone from the burning rays of the sun, its

bustle of people, of overseers, engineers, and workmen, Egyptian, Nubian, Italian, and Greek. The silence I had known was gone, though the desert lay all around—the great sands, the great masses of granite that look as if patiently waiting to be fashioned into obelisks, and sarcophagi, and statues. But away there across the bend of the river, dominating the ugly rummage of this intrusive beehive of human bees, sheer grace overcoming strength both of nature and human nature, rose the fabled "Pharaoh's Bed"; gracious, tender, from Shellal most delicately perfect, and glowing with pale gold against the grim background of the hills on the western shore. It seemed to plead for mercy, like something feminine threatened with outrage, to protest through its mere beauty, as a woman might protest by an attitude, against further desecration.

And in the distance the Nile roared through the many gates of the dam, making answer to the protest.

What irony was in this scene! In the old days of Egypt Philæ was sacred ground, was the Nile-protected home of sacerdotal mysteries, was a veritable Mecca to the believers in Osiris, to which it was forbidden even to draw near without permission. The ancient Egyptians swore solemnly "By him who sleeps in Philæ." Now they sometimes swear angrily at him who wakes in, or at least by, Philæ, and keeps them steadily going at their appointed tasks. And instead of it being forbidden to draw near to a sacred spot, needy men from

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From a photograph by James S. Lee

THE TEMPLE OF ISIS, PHILÆ

foreign countries flock thither in eager crowds, not to worship in beauty, but to earn a living wage.

And "Pharaoh's Bed" looks out over the water and seems to wonder what will be the end.

I was glad to escape from Shellal, pursued by the shriek of an engine announcing its departure from the station, glad to be on the quiet water, to put it between me and that crowd of busy workers. Before me I saw a vast lake, not unlovely, where once the Nile flowed swiftly, far off a gray smudge—the very damnable dam. All around me was a grim and cruel world of rocks, and of hills that look almost like heaps of rubbish, some of them gray, some of them in color so dark that they resemble the lava torrents petrified near Catania, or the "black country" in England through which one rushes on one's way to the North. Just here and there, sweetly almost as the pink blossoms of the wild oleander, which I have seen from Sicilian seas lifting their heads from the crevices of sea rocks, the amber and rosy sands of Nubia smiled down over grit stone and granite.

The setting of Philæ is severe. Even in bright sunshine it has an iron look. On a gray or stormy day it would be forbidding or even terrible. In the old winters and springs one loved Philæ the more because of the contrast of its setting with its own lyrical beauty, its curious tenderness of charm—a charm in which the isle itself was mingled with its buildings. But now,

and before my boat had touched the quay, I saw that the island must be ignored—if possible.

The water with which it is entirely covered during a great part of the year seems to have cast a blight upon it. The very few palms have a drooping and tragic air. The ground has a gangrened appearance, and much of it shows a crawling mass of unwholesome-looking plants, which seem crouching down as if ashamed of their brutal exposure by the receded river, and of harsh and yellow-green grass, unattractive to the eyes. As I stepped on shore I felt as if I were stepping on disease. But at least there were the buildings undisturbed by any outrage. Again I turned toward "Pharaoh's Bed," toward the temple standing apart from it, which already I had seen from the desert, near Shellal, gleaming with its gracious sand-yellow, lifting its series of straight lines of masonry above the river and the rocks, looking, from a distance, very simple, with a simplicity like that of clear water, but as enticing as the light on the first real day of spring.

I went first to "Pharaoh's Bed."

Imagine a woman with a perfectly lovely face, with features as exquisitely proportioned as those, say, of Praxiteles's statue of the Cnidian Aphrodite, for which King Nicomedes was willing to remit the entire national debt of Cnidus, and with a warmly white rose-leaf complexion—one of those complexions one sometimes sees in Italian women, colorless, yet suggestive almost of glow,

NEARLY SUBMERGED COLUMNS, ISLE OF PHILÆ

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

of purity, with the flame of passion behind it. Imagine that woman attacked by a malady which leaves her features exactly as they were, but which changes the color of her face—from the throat upward to just beneath the nose—from the warm white to a mottled, grayish hue. Imagine the line that would seem to be traced between the two complexions—the mottled gray below the warm white still glowing above. Imagine this, and you have "Pharaoh's Bed" and the temple of Philæ as they are to-day.

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

XVII

"PHARAOH'S BED"

"PHARAOH'S BED," which stands alone close to the Nile on the eastern side of the island, is not one of those rugged, majestic buildings, full of grandeur and splendor, which can bear, can "carry off," as it were, a cruelly imposed ugliness without being affected as a whole. It is, on the contrary, a small, almost an airy, and a femininely perfect thing, in which a singular loveliness of form was combined with a singular loveliness of color. The spell it threw over you was not so much a spell woven of details as a spell woven of divine uniformity. To put it in very practical language, "Pharaoh's Bed" was "all of a piece." The form was married to the color. The color seemed to melt into the form. It was indeed a bed in which the soul that worships beauty could rest happily entranced. Nothing jarred. Antiquaries say that apparently this building was left unfinished. That may be so. But for all that it was one of the most finished things in Egypt, essentially a thing to inspire within one the "perfect calm that is Greek." The blighting touch of the Nile, which has changed the beautiful pale yellow of the stone of

PHARAOH'S BED, BEFORE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DAM

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

the lower part of the building to a hideous and dreary gray,—which made me think of a steel knife on which liquid has been spilt and allowed to run,—has destroyed the uniformity, the balance, the faultless melody lifted up by form and color. And so it is with the temple. It is as it were cut in two by the intrusion into it of this hideous, mottled complexion left by the receded water. Everywhere one sees disease on walls and columns, almost blotting out bas-reliefs, giving to their active figures a morbid, a sickly look. The effect is specially distressing in the open court that precedes the temple dedicated to the Lady of Philæ. In this court, which is at the southern end of the island, the Nile at certain seasons is now forced to rise very nearly as high as the capitals of many of the columns. The consequence of this is that here the disease seems making rapid strides. One feels it is drawing near to the heart, and that the poor, doomed invalid may collapse at any moment.

Yes, there is much to make one sad at Philæ. But how much of pure beauty there is left—of beauty that mutely protests against any further outrage!

As there is something epic in the grandeur of the Lotus Hall at Karnak, so there is something lyrical in the soft charm of the Philæ temple. Certain things or places, certain things in certain places, always suggest to my mind certain people in whose genius I take delight—who have won me, and moved me by their art. Whenever I go to Philæ, the name of Shelley comes to

me. I scarcely could tell why. I have no special reason to connect Shelley with Philæ. But when I see that almost airy loveliness of stone, so simply elegant, so, somehow, spring-like in its pale-colored beauty, its happy, daffodil charm, with its touch of the Greek,—the sensitive hand from Attica stretched out over Nubia,—I always think of Shelley. I think of Shelley the youth who dived down into the pool so deep that it seemed he was lost forever to the sun. I think of Shelley the poet, full of a lyric ecstasy, who was himself like an embodied

> Longing for something afar
> From the sphere of our sorrow.

Lyrical Philæ is like a temple of dreams, and of all poets Shelley might have dreamed the dream, and have told it to the world in a song.

For all its solidity, there are a strange lightness and grace in the temple of Philæ; there is an elegance you will not find in the other temples of Egypt. But it is an elegance quite undefiled by weakness, by any sentimentality. (Even a building, like a love-lorn maid, can be sentimental.) Edward Fitzgerald once defined taste as the feminine of genius. Taste prevails in Philæ, a certain delicious femininity that seduces the eyes and the heart of man. Shall we call it the spirit of Isis?

I have heard a clever critic and antiquarian declare that he is not very fond of Philæ; that he feels a cer-

"PHARAOH'S BED," ISLAND OF PHILÆ

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

tain "spuriousness" in the temple due to the mingling of Greek with Egyptian influences. He may be right. I am no antiquarian, and, as a mere lover of beauty, I do not feel this "spuriousness." I can see neither two quarreling strengths nor any weakness caused by division. I suppose I see only the beauty, as I might see only the beauty of a woman bred of a handsome father and mother of different races, and who, not typical of either, combined in her features and figure distinguishing merits of both. It is true that there is a particular pleasure which is roused in us only by the absolutely typical—the completely thoroughbred person or thing. It may be a pleasure not caused by beauty, and it may be very keen, nevertheless. When it is combined with the joy roused in us by all beauty, it is a very pure emotion of exceptional delight. Philæ does not, perhaps, give this emotion. But it certainly has a lovableness that attaches the heart in a quite singular degree. The Philæ-lover is the most faithful of lovers. The hold of his mistress upon him, once it has been felt, is never relaxed. And in his affection for Philæ there is, I think, nearly always a rainbow strain of romance.

When we love anything, we love to be able to say of the object of our devotion, "There is nothing like it." Now, in all Egypt, and I suppose in all the world, there is nothing just like Philæ. There are temples, yes; but where else is there a bouquet of gracious

buildings such as these gathered in such a holder as this tiny, raft-like isle? And where else are just such delicate and, as I have said, light and almost feminine elegance and charm set in the midst of such severe sterility? Once, beyond Philæ, the Great Cataract roared down from the wastes of Nubia into the green fertility of Upper Egypt. It roars no longer. But still the masses of the rocks, and still the amber and the yellow sands, and still the iron-colored hills, keep guard round Philæ. And still, despite the vulgar desecration that has turned Shellal into a workmen's suburb and dowered it with a railway-station, there is mystery in Philæ, and the sense of isolation that only an island gives. Even now one can forget in Philæ—forget, after a while, and in certain parts of its buildings, the presence of the gray disease; forget the threatening of the altruists, who desire to benefit humanity by clearing as much beauty out of humanity's abiding-place as possible; forget the fact of the railway, except when the shriek of the engine floats over the water to one's ears; forget economic problems, and the destruction that their solving brings upon the silent world of things whose "use," denied, unrecognized, or laughed at, to man is in their holy beauty, whose mission lies not upon the broad highways where tramps the hungry body, but upon the secret, shadowy byways where glides the hungry soul.

Yes, one can forget even now in the hall of the tem-

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From a photograph by James S. Lee

IN "PHARAOH'S BED," ISLAND OF PHILÆ

ple of Isis, where the capricious graces of form are linked with the capricious graces of color, where, like old and delicious music in the golden strings of a harp, dwells a something—what is it? A murmur, or a perfume, or a breathing?—of old and vanished years when forsakened gods were worshiped. And one can forget in the chapel of Hathor, on whose wall little Horus is born, and in the gray hounds' chapel beside it. One can forget, for one walks in beauty.

Lovely are the doorways in Philæ; enticing are the shallow steps that lead one onward and upward; gracious the yellow towers that seem to smile a quiet welcome. And there is one chamber that is simply a place of magic—the hall of the painted portico, the delicious hall of the flowers.

It is this chamber which always makes me think of Philæ as a lovely temple of dreams, this silent, retired chamber, where some fabled princess might well have been touched to a long, long sleep of enchantment, and lain for years upon years among the magical flowers—the lotus, and the palm, and the papyrus.

In my youth it made upon me an indelible impression. Through intervening years, filled with many new impressions, many wanderings, many visions of beauty in other lands, that retired, painted chamber had not faded from my mind—or shall I say from my heart? There had seemed to me within it something that was ineffable, as in a lyric of Shelley's there is something

that is ineffable, or in certain pictures of Boecklin, such as "The Villa by the Sea." And when at last, almost afraid and hesitating, I came into it once more, I found in it again the strange spell of old enchantment.

It seems as if this chamber had been imagined by a poet, who had set it in the center of the temple of his dream. It is such a spontaneous chamber that one can scarcely imagine it more than a day and a night in the building. Yet in detail it is lovely; it is finished and strangely mighty; it is a lyric in stone, the most poetical chamber, perhaps, in the whole of Egypt. For Philæ I count in Egypt, though really it is in Nubia.

One who has not seen Philæ may perhaps wonder how a tall chamber of solid stone, containing heavy and soaring columns, can be like a lyric of Shelley's, can be exquisitely spontaneous, and yet hold a something of mystery that makes one tread softly in it, and fear to disturb within it some lovely sleeper of Nubia, some Princess of the Nile. He must continue to wonder. To describe this chamber calmly, as I might, for instance, describe the temple of Derr, would be simply to destroy it. For things ineffable cannot be fully explained, or not be fully felt by those the twilight of whose dreams is fitted to mingle with their twilight. They who are meant to love with ardor *se passionnent pour la passion.* And they who are meant to take and to keep the spirit of a dream, whether it be hidden in a poem, or held in the cup of a flower, or enfolded in

FORE-COURT OF THE TEMPLE OF ISIS AND "PHARAOH'S BED," PHILÆ

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From a photograph by James S. Lee

arms of stone, will surely never miss it, even though they can hear roaring loudly above its elfin voice the cry of directed waters rushing down to Upper Egypt.

How can one disentangle from their tapestry web the different threads of a spell? And even if one could, if one could hold them up, and explain, "The cause of the spell is that this comes in contact with this, and that this, which I show you, blends with, fades into, this," how could it advantage any one? Nothing would be made clearer, nothing be really explained. The ineffable is, and must ever remain, something remote and mysterious.

And so one may say many things of this painted chamber of Philæ, and yet never convey, perhaps never really know, the innermost cause of its charm. In it there is obvious beauty of form, and a seizing beauty of color, beauty of sunlight and shadow, of antique association. This turquoise blue is enchanting, and Isis was worshiped here. What has the one to do with the other? Nothing; and yet how much! For is not each of these facts a thread in the tapestry web of the spell? The eyes see the rapture of this very perfect blue. The imagination hears, as if very far off, the solemn chanting of priests, and smells the smoke of strange perfumes, and sees the long, aquiline nose and the thin, haughty lips of the goddess. And the color becomes strange to the eyes, as well as very lovely, because, perhaps, it was there—it almost certainly was

there—when from Constantinople went forth the decree that all Egypt should be Christian; when the priests of the sacred brotherhood of Isis were driven from their temple.

Isis nursing Horus gave way to the Virgin and the child. But the cycles spin away down "the ringing grooves of change." From Egypt has passed away that decreed Christianity. Now from the minaret the muezzin cries, and in palm-shaded villages I hear the loud hymns of earnest pilgrims starting on the journey to Mecca. And ever this painted chamber shelters its mystery of poetry, its mystery of charm. And still its marvelous colors are fresh as in the far-off pagan days, and the opening lotus-flowers, and the closed lotus-buds, and the palm and the papyrus, are on the perfect columns. And their intrinsic loveliness, and their freshness, and their age, and the mysteries they have looked on—all these facts are part of the spell that governs us to-day. In Edfu one is inclosed in a wonderful austerity. And one can only worship. In Philæ one is wrapped in a radiance of color. And one can only dream. For there is coral pink, and there a wonderful green, "like the green light that lingers in the west," and there is a blue as deep as the blue of a tropical sea; and there are green-blue and lustrous, ardent red. And the odd fantasy in the coloring, is not that like the fantasy in the temple of a dream? For those who painted these capitals for the greater glory

ABU-SIMBEL

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

of Isis did not fear to depart from nature, and to their patient worship a blue palm perhaps seemed a rarely sacred thing. And that palm is part of the spell, and the reliefs upon the walls, and even the Coptic crosses that are cut into the stone.

But, at the end, one can only say that this place is indescribable, and not because it is complex or terrifically grand, like Karnak. Go to it on a sunlit morning, or stand in it in late afternoon, and perhaps you will feel that it "suggests" you, that it carries you away, out of familiar regions into a land of dreams, where among hidden ways the soul is lost in magic. Yes, you are gone.

To the right—for one, alas! cannot live in a dream forever—is a lovely doorway through which one sees the river. Facing it is another doorway, showing a fragment of the poor, vivisected island, some ruined walls, and still another doorway in which, again, is framed the Nile. Many people have cut their names upon the walls of Philæ. Once, as I sat alone there, I felt strongly attracted to look upward to a wall, as if some personality, enshrined within the stone, were watching me, or calling. I looked, and saw written "Balzac."

Philæ is the last temple that one visits before he gives himself to the wildness of the solitudes of Nubia. It stands at the very frontier. As one goes up the Nile, it is like a smiling adieu from the Egypt

one is leaving. As one comes down, it is like a smiling welcome. In its delicate charm I feel something of the charm of the Egyptian character. There are moments, indeed, when I identify Egypt with Philæ. For in Philæ one must dream; and on the Nile, too, one must dream. And always the dream is happy, and shot through with radiant light—light that is as radiant as the colors in Philæ's temple. The pylons of Ptolemy smile at you as you go up or come down the river. And the people of Egypt smile as they enter into your dream. A suavity, too, is theirs. I think of them often as artists, who know their parts in the dream-play, who know exactly their function, and how to fulfil it rightly. They sing, while you are dreaming, but it is an undersong, like the murmur of an Eastern river far off from any sea. It never disturbs, this music, but it helps you in your dream. And they are softly gay. And in their eyes there is often the gleam of sunshine, for they are the children—but not grown men—of the sun. That, indeed, is one of the many strange things in Egypt—the youthfulness of its age, the childlikeness of its almost terrible antiquity. One goes there to look at the oldest things in the world and to feel perpetually young—young as Philæ is young, as a lyric of Shelley's is young, as all of our day-dreams are young, as the people of Egypt are young.

Oh, that Egypt could be kept as it is, even as it is now; that Philæ could be preserved even as it is now!

ABU-SIMBEL FROM THE RIVER

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

From stereograph, copyright, 1904, by Underwood & Underwood, New York

The spoilers are there, those blithe modern spirits, so frightfully clever and capable, so industrious, so determined, so unsparing of themselves and—of others! Already they are at work "benefiting Egypt." Tall chimneys begin to vomit smoke along the Nile. A damnable tram-line for little trolleys leads one toward the wonderful Colossi of Memnon. Close to Kom Ombos some soul imbued with romance has had the inspiration to set up—a factory. And Philæ—is it to go?

Is beauty, then, of no value in the world? Is it always to be the prey of modern progress? Is nothing to be considered sacred; nothing to be left untouched, unsmirched by the grimy fingers of improvement? I suppose nothing.

Then let those who still care to dream go now to Philæ's painted chamber by the long reaches of the Nile; go on, if they will, to the giant forms of Abu-Simbel among the Nubian sands. And perhaps they will think with me, that in some dreams there is a value greater than the value that is entered in any bank-book, and they will say, with me, however uselessly:

"Leave to the world some dreams, some places in which to dream; for if it needs dams to make the grain grow in the stretches of land that were barren, and railways, and tram-lines, and factory chimneys that vomit black smoke in the face of the sun, surely it needs also painted chambers of Philæ and the silence that comes down from Isis."

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE LIBRARY.

XVIII

OLD CAIRO

BY old Cairo I do not mean only "le vieux Caire" of the guide-book, the little, desolate village containing the famous Coptic church of Abu Sergius, in the crypt of which the Virgin Mary and Christ are said to have stayed when they fled to the land of Egypt to escape the fury of King Herod; but the Cairo that is not new, that is not dedicated wholly to officialdom and tourists, that, in the midst of changes and the advance of civilization,—civilization that does so much harm as well as so much good, that showers benefits with one hand and defaces beauty with the other,—preserves its immemorial calm or immemorial tumult; that stands aloof, as stands aloof ever the Eastern from the Western man, even in the midst of what seems, perhaps, like intimacy; Eastern to the soul, though the fantasies, the passions, the vulgarities, the brilliant ineptitudes of the West, beat about it like waves about some unyielding wall of the sea.

When I went back to Egypt, after a lapse of many years, I fled at once from Cairo, and upon the long reaches of the Nile, in the great spaces of the Libyan

Desert, in the luxuriant palm-groves of the Fayyum, among the tamarisk-bushes and on the pale waters of Kurun, I forgot the changes which, in my brief glimpse of the city and its environs, had moved me to despondency. But one cannot live in the solitudes forever. And at last from Madi-nat-al-Fayyum, with the first pilgrims starting for Mecca, I returned to the great city, determined to seek in it once more for the fascinations it used to hold, and perhaps still held in the hidden ways where modern feet, nearly always in a hurry, had seldom time to penetrate.

A mist hung over the land. Out of it, with a sort of stern energy, there came to my ears loud hymns sung by the pilgrim voices—hymns in which, mingled with the enthusiasm of devotees en route for the holiest shrine of their faith, there seemed to sound the resolution of men strung up to confront the fatigues and the dangers of a great journey through a wild and unknown country. Those hymns led my feet to the venerable mosques of Cairo, the city of mosques, guided me on my lesser pilgrimage among the cupolas and the colonnades, where grave men dream in the silence near marble fountains, or bend muttering their prayers beneath domes that are dimmed by the ruthless fingers of Time. In the buildings consecrated to prayer and to meditation I first sought for the magic that stills lurks in the teeming bosom of Cairo.

Long ago I had sought it elsewhere, in the brilliant

bazaars by day, and by night in the winding alleys, where the dark-eyed Jews looked stealthily forth from the low-browed doorways; where the Circassian girls promenade, gleaming with golden coins and barbaric jewels; where the air is alive with music that is feverish and antique, and in strangely lighted interiors one sees forms clad in brilliant draperies, or severely draped in the simplest pale-blue garments, moving in languid dances, fluttering painted fingers, bending, swaying, dropping down, like the forms that people a dream.

In the bazaars is the passion for gain, in the alleys of music and light is the passion for pleasure, in the mosques is the passion for prayer that connects the souls of men with the unseen but strongly felt world. Each of these passions is old, each of these passions in the heart of Islam is fierce. On my return to Cairo I sought for the hidden fire that is magic in the dusky places of prayer.

A mist lay over the city as I stood in a narrow byway, and gazed up at a heavy lattice, of which the decayed and blackened wood seemed on guard before some tragic or weary secret. Before me was the entrance to the mosque of Ibn-Tulun, older than any mosque in Cairo save only the mosque of Amru. It is approached by a flight of steps, on each side of which stand old, impenetrable houses. Above my head, strung across from one house to the other, were many little red and yellow flags ornamented with gold lozenges. These

were to bear witness that in a couple of days' time, from the great open place beneath the citadel of Cairo, the Sacred Carpet was to set out on its long journey to Mecca. My guide struck on a door and uttered a fierce cry. A small shutter in the blackened lattice was opened, and a young girl, with kohl-tinted eyelids, and a brilliant yellow handkerchief tied over her coarse, black hair, leaned out, held a short parley, and vanished, drawing the shutter to behind her. The mist crept up about the tawdry flags, a heavy door creaked, whined on its hinges, and from the house of the girl there came an old, fat man bearing a mighty key. In a moment I was free of the mosque of Ibn-Tulun.

I ascended the steps, passed through a doorway, and found myself on a piece of waste ground, flanked on the right by an old, mysterious wall, and on the left by the long wall of the mosque, from which close to me rose a gray, unornamented minaret, full of the plain dignity of unpretending age. Upon its summit was perched a large and weary-looking bird with draggled feathers, which remained so still that it seemed to be a sad ornament set there above the city, and watching it forever with eyes that could not see. At right angles, touching the mosque, was such a house as one can see only in the East—fantastically old, fantastically decayed, bleared, discolored, filthy, melancholy, showing hideous windows like windows in the slum of a town set above coal-pits in a colliery district, a degraded house, and

yet a house which roused the imagination and drove it to its work. In this building once dwelt the High Priest of the mosque. This dwelling, the ancient wall, the gray minaret with its motionless bird, the lamentable waste ground at my feet, prepared me rightly to appreciate the bit of old Cairo I had come to see.

People who are bored by Gothic churches would not love the mosque of Ibn-Tulun. No longer is it used for worship. It contains no praying life. Abandoned, bare, and devoid of all lovely ornament, it stands like some hoary patriarch, naked and calm, waiting its destined end without impatience and without fear. It is a fatalistic mosque, and is impressive, like a fatalistic man. The great court of it, three hundred feet square, with pointed arches supported by piers, double, and on the side looking toward Mecca quintuple arcades, has a great dignity of somber simplicity. Not grace, not a light elegance or soaring beauty, but massiveness and heavy strength are the distinguishing features of this mosque. Even the octagonal basin and its protecting cupola that stand in the middle of the court lack the charm that belongs to so many of the fountains of Cairo. There are two minarets, the minaret of the bird, and a larger one, approached by a big stairway up which, so my dragoman told me, a Sultan whose name I have forgotten loved to ride his favorite horse. Upon the summit of this minaret I stood for a long time, looking down over the city.

Gray it was that morning, almost as London is gray; but the sounds that came up softly to my ears out of the mist were not the sounds of London. Those many minarets, almost like columns of fog rising above the cupolas, spoke to me of the East even upon this sad and sunless morning. Once from where I was standing at the time appointed went forth the call to prayer, and in the barren court beneath me there were crowds of ardent worshipers. Stern men paced upon the huge terrace just at my feet fingering their beads, and under that heavy cupola were made the long ablutions of the faithful. But now no man comes to this old place, no murmur to God disturbs the heavy silence. And the silence, and the emptiness, and the grayness under the long arcades, all seem to make a tremulous proclamation; all seem to whisper, "I am very old, I am useless, I cumber the earth." Even the mosque of Amru, which stands also on ground that looks gone to waste, near dingy and squat houses built with gray bricks, seems less old than this mosque of Ibn-Tulun. For its long façade is striped with white and apricot, and there are lebbek-trees growing in its court near the two columns between which if you can pass you are assured of heaven. But the mosque of Ibn-Tulun, seen upon a sad day, makes a powerful impression, and from the summit of its minaret you are summoned by the many minarets of Cairo to make the pilgrimage of the mosques, to pass from the "broken arches" of these Saracenic cloisters

to the "Blue Mosque," the "Red Mosque," the mosques of Mohammed Ali, of Sultan Hassan, of Kait Bey, of El-Azhar, and so on to the Coptic church that is the silent center of "old Cairo." It is said that there are over four hundred mosques in Cairo. As I looked down from the minaret of Ibn-Tulun, they called me through the mist that blotted completely out all the surrounding country, as if it would concentrate my attention upon the places of prayer during these holy days when the pilgrims were crowding in to depart with the Holy Carpet. And I went down by the staircase of the horse, and in the mist I made my pilgrimage.

As every one who visits Rome goes to St. Peter's, so every one who visits Cairo goes to the mosque of Mohammed Ali in the citadel, a gorgeous building in a magnificent situation, the interior of which always makes me think of court functions, and of the pomp of life, rather than of prayer and self-denial. More attractive to me is the "Blue Mosque," to which I returned again and again, enticed almost as by the fascination of the living blue of a summer sky.

This mosque, which is the mosque of Ibrahim Aga, but which is familiarly known to its lovers as the "Blue Mosque," lies to the left of a ramshackle street, and from the outside does not look specially inviting. Even when I passed through its door, and stood in the court beyond, at first I felt not its charm. All looked old and rough, unkempt and in confusion. The red and white

stripes of the walls and the arches of the arcade, the mean little place for ablution,—a pipe and a row of brass taps,—led the mind from a Neapolitan ice to a second-rate school, and for a moment I thought of abruptly retiring and seeking more splendid precincts. And then I looked across the court to the arcade that lay beyond, and I saw the exquisite "love color" of the marvelous tiles that gives this mosque its name.

The huge pillars of this arcade are striped and ugly, but between them shone, with an ineffable luster, a wall of purple and blue, of purple and blue so strong and yet so delicate that it held the eyes and drew the body forward. If ever color calls, it calls in the blue mosque of Ibrahim Aga. And when I had crossed the court, when I stood beside the pulpit, with its delicious, wooden folding-doors, and studied the tiles of which this wonderful wall is composed, I found them as lovely near as they are lovely far off. From a distance they resemble a nature effect, are almost like a bit of Southern sea or of sky, a fragment of gleaming Mediterranean seen through the pillars of a loggia, or of Sicilian blue watching over Etna in the long summer days. When one is close to them, they are a miracle of art. The background of them is a milky white upon which is an elaborate pattern of purple and blue, generally conventional and representative of no known object, but occasionally showing tall trees somewhat resembling cypresses. But it is impossible in words adequately to

describe the effect of these tiles, and of the tiles that line to the very roof the tomb-house on the right of the court. They are like a cry of ecstasy going up in this otherwise not very beautiful mosque; they make it unforgetable, they draw you back to it again and yet again. On the darkest day of winter they set something of summer there. In the saddest moment they proclaim the fact that there is joy in the world, that there was joy in the hearts of creative artists years upon years ago. If you are ever in Cairo, and sink into depression, go to the "Blue Mosque" and see if it does not have upon you an uplifting moral effect. And then, if you like, go on from it to the Gamia El Movayad, sometimes called El Ahmar, "The Red," where you will find greater glories, though no greater fascination; for the tiles hold their own among all the wonders of Cairo.

Outside the "Red Mosque," by its imposing and lofty wall, there is always an assemblage of people, for prayers go up in this mosque, ablutions are made there, and the floor of the arcade is often covered with men studying the Koran, calmly meditating, or prostrating themselves in prayer. And so there is a great coming and going up the outside stairs and through the wonderful doorway: beggars crouch under the wall of the terrace; the sellers of cakes, of syrups and lemon water, and of the big and luscious watermelons that are so popular in Cairo, display their wares beneath awnings of orange-colored sackcloth, or in the full glare of the

sun, and, their prayers comfortably completed or perhaps not yet begun, the worshipers stand to gossip, or sit to smoke their pipes, before going on their way into the city or the mosque. There are noise and perpetual movement here. Stand for a while to gain an impression from them before you mount the steps and pass into the spacious peace beyond.

Orientals must surely revel in contrasts. There is no tumult like the tumult in certain of their market-places. There is no peace like the peace in certain of their mosques. Even without the slippers carefully tied over your boots you would walk softly, gingerly, in the mosque of El Movayad, the mosque of the columns and the garden. For once within the door you have taken wings and flown from the city, you are in a haven where the most delicious calm seems floating like an atmosphere. Through a lofty colonnade you come into the mosque, and find yourself beneath a magnificently ornamental wooden roof, the general effect of which is of deep brown and gold, though there are deftly introduced many touches of very fine red and strong, luminous blue. The walls are covered with gold and superb marbles, and there are many quotations from the Koran in Arab lettering heavy with gold. The great doors are of chiseled bronze and of wood. In the distance is a sultan's tomb, surmounted by a high and beautiful cupola, and pierced with windows of jeweled glass. But the attraction of this place of prayer

comes less from its magnificence, from the shining of its gold, and the gleaming of its many-colored marbles, than from its spaciousness, its airiness, its still seclusion, and its garden. Mohammedans love fountains and shady places, as can surely love them only those who carry in their minds a remembrance of the desert. They love to have flowers blowing beside them while they pray. And within the immensely high and crenelated walls of this mosque long ago they set a fountain of pure-white marble, covered it with a shelter of limestone, and planted trees and flowers about it. There beneath palms and tall eucalyptus-trees even on this misty day of the winter, roses were blooming, pinks scented the air, and great red flowers, that looked like emblems of passion, stared upward almost fiercely, as if searching for the sun. As I stood there among the worshipers in the wide colonnade, near the exquisitely carved pulpit in the shadow of which an old man who looked like Abraham was swaying to and fro and whispering his prayers, I thought of Omar Khayyam and how he would have loved this garden. But instead of water from the white marble fountain, he would have desired a cup of wine to drink beneath the boughs of the sheltering trees. And he could not have joined without doubt or fear in the fervent devotions of the undoubting men, who came here to steep their wills in the great will that flowed about them like the ocean about little islets of the sea.

From the "Red Mosque" I went to the great mosque of El-Azhar, to the wonderful mosque of Sultan Hassan, which unfortunately was being repaired and could not be properly seen, though the examination of the old portal covered with silver, gold, and brass, the general color effect of which is a delicious dull green, repaid me for my visit, and to the exquisitely graceful tomb-mosque of Kait Bey, which is beyond the city walls. But though I visited these, and many other mosques and tombs, including the tombs of the Khalifas, and the extremely smart modern tombs of the family of the present Khedive of Egypt, no building dedicated to worship, or to the cult of the dead, left a more lasting impression upon my mind than the Coptic church of Abu Sergius, or Abu Sargah, which stands in the desolate and strangely antique quarter called "Old Cairo." Old indeed it seems, almost terribly old. Silent and desolate is it, untouched by the vivid life of the rich and prosperous Egypt of to-day, a place of sad dreams, a place of ghosts, a place of living specters. I went to it alone. Any companion, however dreary, would have tarnished the perfection of the impression old Cairo and its Coptic church can give to the lonely traveler.

I descended to a gigantic door of palmwood which was set in an old brick arch. This door upon the outside was sheeted with iron. When it opened, I left behind me the world I knew, the world that belongs to

us of to-day, with its animation, its impetus, its flashing changes, its sweeping hurry and "go." I stepped at once into, surely, some moldering century long hidden in the dark womb of the forgotten past. The door of palmwood closed, and I found myself in a sort of deserted town, of narrow, empty streets, beetling archways, tall houses built of gray bricks, which looked as if they had turned gradually gray, as hair does on an aged head. Very, very tall were these houses. They all appeared horribly, almost indecently, old. As I stood and stared at them, I remembered a story of a Russian friend of mine, a landed proprietor, on whose country estate dwelt a peasant woman who lived to be over a hundred. Each year, when he came from Petersburg, this old woman arrived to salute him. At last she was a hundred and four, and, when he left his estate for the winter, she bade him good-by forever. For ever! But, lo! the next year there she still was—one hundred and five years old, deeply ashamed and full of apologies for being still alive. "I cannot help it," she said. "I ought no longer to be here, but it seems I do not know anything. I do not know even how to die!" The gray, tall houses of old Cairo do not know how to die. So there they stand, showing their haggard façades, which are broken by protruding, worm-eaten, wooden lattices not unlike the shaggy, protuberant eyebrows which sometimes sprout above bleared eyes that have seen too much. No one looked out from these lattices. Was

there, could there be, any life behind them? Did they conceal harems of centenarian women with wrinkled faces, and corrugated necks and hands? Here and there drooped down a string terminating in a lamp covered with minute dust, that wavered in the wintry wind which stole tremulously between the houses. And the houses seemed to be leaning forward, as if they were fain to touch each other and leave no place for the wind, as if they would blot out the exiguous alleys, so that no life should ever venture to stir through them again. Did the eyes of the Virgin Mary, did the baby eyes of the Christ child, ever gaze upon these buildings? One could almost believe it. One could almost believe that already these buildings were there when, fleeing from the wrath of Herod, Mother and Child sought the shelter of the crypt of Abu Sargah.

I went on, walking with precaution, and presently I saw a man. He was sitting collapsed beneath an archway, and he looked older than the world. He was clad in what seemed like a sort of cataract of multicolored rags. An enormous white beard flowed down over his shrunken breast. His face was a mass of yellow wrinkles. His eyes were closed. His yellow fingers were twined about a wooden staff. Above his head was drawn a patched hood. Was he alive or dead? I could not tell, and I passed him on tiptoe. And going always with precaution between the tall, gray houses and beneath the lowering arches, I came at last to the Coptic church.

Near it, in the street, were several Copts, large, fat, yellow-skinned, apparently sleeping, in attitudes that made them look like bundles. I woke one up, and asked to see the church. He stared, changed slowly from a bundle to a standing man, went away and presently, returning with a key and a pale, intelligent-looking youth, admitted me into one of the strangest buildings it was ever my lot to enter.

The average Coptic church is far less fascinating than the average mosque, but the church of Abu Sargah is like no other church that I visited in Egypt. Its aspect of hoary age makes it strangely, almost thrillingly impressive. Now and then, in going about the world, one comes across a human being, like the white-bearded man beneath the arch, who might be a thousand years old, two thousand, anything, whose appearance suggests that he or she, perhaps, was of the company which was driven out of Eden, but that the expulsion was not recorded. And now and then one happens upon a building that creates the same impression. Such a building is this church. It is known and recorded that more than a thousand years ago it had a patriarch whose name was Shenuti; but it is supposed to have been built long before that time, and parts of it look as if they had been set up at the very beginning of things. The walls are dingy and whitewashed. The wooden roof is peaked, with many cross-beams. High up on the walls are several small square lattices of wood. The

floor is of discolored stone. Everywhere one sees wood wrought into lattices, crumbling carpets that look almost as frail and brittle and fatigued as wrappings of mummies, and worn-out matting that would surely become as the dust if one set his feet hard upon it. The structure of the building is basilican, and it contains some strange carvings of the Last Supper, the Nativity, and St. Demetrius. Around the nave there are monolithic columns of white marble, and one column of the red and shining granite that is found in such quantities at Assuan. There are three altars in three chapels facing toward the East. Coptic monks and nuns are renowned for their austerity of life, and their almost fierce zeal in fasting and in prayer, and in Coptic churches the services are sometimes so long that the worshipers, who are almost perpetually standing, use crutches for their support. In their churches there always seems to me to be a cold and austere atmosphere, far different from the atmosphere of the mosques or of any Roman Catholic church. It sometimes rather repels me, and generally makes me feel either dull or sad. But in this immensely old church of Abu Sargah the atmosphere of melancholy aids the imagination.

In Coptic churches there is generally a great deal of woodwork made into lattices, and into the screens which mark the divisions, usually four, but occasionally five, which each church contains, and which are set apart for the altar, for the priests, singers, and ministrants, for

the male portion of the congregation, and for the women, who sit by themselves. These divisions, so different from the wide spaciousness and airiness of the mosques, where only pillars and columns partly break up the perspective, give to Coptic buildings an air of secrecy and of mystery, which, however, is often rather repellent than alluring. In the high wooden lattices there are narrow doors, and in the division which contains the altar the door is concealed by a curtain embroidered with a large cross. The Mohammedans who created the mosques showed marvelous taste. Copts are often lacking in taste, as they have proved here and there in Abu Sargah. Above one curious and unlatticed screen, near to a matted dais, droops a hideous banner, red, purple, and yellow, with a white cross. Peeping in, through an oblong aperture, one see a sort of minute circus, in the form of a half-moon, containing a table with an ugly red-and-white striped cloth. There the Eucharist, which must be preceded by confession, is celebrated. The pulpit is of rosewood, inlaid with ivory and ebony, and in what is called the "haikal-screen" there are some fine specimens of carved ebony.

As I wandered about over the tattered carpets and the crumbling matting, under the peaked roof, as I looked up at the flat-roofed galleries, or examined the sculptures and ivory mosaics that, bleared by the passing of centuries, seemed to be fading away under my very eyes, as upon every side I was confronted by the

hoary wooden lattices in which the dust found a home and rested undisturbed, and as I thought of the narrow alleys of gray and silent dwellings through which I had come to this strange and melancholy "Temple of the Father," I seemed to feel upon my breast the weight of the years that had passed since pious hands erected this home of prayer in which now no one was praying. But I had yet to receive another and a deeper impression of solemnity and heavy silence. By a staircase I descended to the crypt, which lies beneath the choir of the church, and there, surrounded by columns of venerable marble, beside an altar, I stood on the very spot where, according to tradition, the Virgin Mary soothed the Christ child to sleep in the dark night. And, as I stood there, I felt that the tradition was a true one, and that there indeed had stayed the wondrous Child and the Holy Mother long, how long, ago.

The pale, intelligent Coptic youth, who had followed me everywhere, and who now stood like a statue gazing upon me with his lustrous eyes, murmured in English, "This very good place; this most interestin' place in Cairo."

Certainly it is a place one can never forget. For it holds in its dusty arms—what? Something impalpable, something ineffable, something strange as death, spectral, cold, yet exciting, something that seems to creep into it out of the distant past and to whisper: "I am here. I am not utterly dead. Still I have a voice and

can murmur to you, eyes and can regard you, a soul and can, if only for a moment, be your companion in this sad, yet sacred, place."

Contrast is the salt, the pepper, too, of life, and one of the great joys of travel is that at will one can command contrast. From silence one can plunge into noise, from stillness one can hasten to movement, from the strangeness and the wonder of the antique past one can step into the brilliance, the gaiety, the vivid animation of the present. From Babylon one can go to Bulak; and on to Bab Zouweleh, with its crying children, its veiled women, its cake-sellers, its fruiterers, its turbaned Ethiopians, its black Nubians, and almost fair Egyptians; one can visit the bazaars, or on a market morning spend an hour at Shareh-el-Gamaleyeh, watching the disdainful camels pass, soft-footed, along the shadowy streets, and the flat-nosed African negroes, with their almost purple-black skins, their bulging eyes, in which yellow lights are caught, and their huge hands with turned-back thumbs, count their gains, or yell their disappointment over a bargain from which they have come out not victors, but vanquished. If in Cairo there are melancholy, and silence, and antiquity, in Cairo may be found also places of intense animation, of almost frantic bustle, of uproar that cries to heaven. To Bulak still come the high-prowed boats of the Nile, with striped sails bellying before a fair wind, to unload their merchandise. From the Delta they bring thousands of

panniers of fruit, and from Upper Egypt and from Nubia all manner of strange and precious things which are absorbed into the great bazaars of the city, and are sold to many a traveler at prices which, to put it mildly, bring to the sellers a good return. For in Egypt if one leaves his heart, he leaves also not seldom his skin. The goblin men of the great goblin market of Cairo take all, and remain unsatisfied and calling for more. I said, in a former chapter, that no fierce demands for money fell upon my ears. But I confess, when I said it, that I had forgotten certain bazaars of Cairo.

But what matters it? He who has drunk Nile water must return. The golden country calls him; the mosques with their marble columns, their blue tiles, their stern-faced worshipers; the narrow streets with their tall houses, their latticed windows, their peeping eyes looking down on the life that flows beneath and can never be truly tasted; the Pyramids with their bases in the sand and their pointed summits somewhere near the stars; the Sphinx with its face that is like the enigma of human life; the great river that flows by the tombs and the temples; the great desert that girdles it with a golden girdle.

Egypt calls—even across the space of the world; and across the space of the world he who knows it is ready to come, obedient to its summons, because in thrall to the eternal fascination of the "land of sand, and ruins, and gold"; the land of the charmèd serpent,

the land of the afterglow, that may fade away from the sky above the mountains of Libya, but that fades never from the memory of one who has seen it from the base of some great column, or the top of some mighty pylon; the land that has a spell—wonderful, beautiful Egypt.

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE
LIBRARY.

HONG KONG UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

MAY 1940

WORKING MEN'S
COLLEGE
LIBRARY

THIS BOOK TO BE RETURNED BY: